EXPERIMENT AND TRANSGRESSION IN JOHN MARSTON'S PLAYS

by

Sam (P.M.J.) Gill

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in English

in the

University of Canterbury

1995.

University of Canterbury

Abstract

EXPERIMENT AND TRANSGRESSION IN JOHN MARSTON'S PLAYS

by Sam (P.M.J.) Gill

This thesis is an examination of *Histriomastix, Antonio and Mellida, Antonio's Revenge, Jacke Drum's Entertainment, What You Will* and *The Malcontent*, focusing on the ways in which the plays can be regarded as experimental. It proposes that the *Antonio* plays and *The Malcontent* resemble experiments which explore options against the abuse of power, and that all the plays experiment with dramatic conventions in a manner that heightens audience awareness of them.

The model of the Stoic *praemeditatio futuri mali* provides a theoretical basis for the argument that the plays investigate possibilities rather than offer solutions to the problems they raise. This approach leads to the observation that the plays after *Histriomastix* are linked by examinations of Stoic philosophy and deceptive appearances.

Marston's treatment of dramatic conventions such as genre, plot and characterisation is investigated, and it is argued that he frequently transgresses convention, with the result that the plays emphasise their status as dramatic works and the limitations of dramatic representation are made apparent.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.

Marston's plays are not widely read,[1] although critical interest has increased since T. S. Eliot's 1934 essay, "John Marston". When they are examined, the response is frequently one of perplexity. Eliot writes of *Antonio and Mellida* and *Antonio's Revenge* that, on reading them, "our first impression is likely to be one of bewilderment, that anyone could write plays so bad and that plays so bad could be preserved and reprinted" (223), further commenting that "A blockhead could not have written them; a painstaking blockhead would have done better; and a careless master, or a careless dunce, would not have gone out of his way to produce the effects of nonsensicality which we meet" (224). Two years later, Una Ellis-Fermor remarks that Marston's "early work was experimental", though she does not specify the nature of the experiment (77).

More recently, critics have shown a propensity for abandoning the task of examining the plays in favour of attacking the dramatist. "[T]he only standard is the author's whim", writes T. F. Wharton of the *Antonio* plays, "whose sole consistent aim seems to be to evoke sympathetic concern for hero, heroine and friends, in a romantic melodrama" (361). David L. Frost's exasperation leads to a vituperative attack:

> Marston's fragmented work is so much an expression of his divided personality that we are entitled to comment upon it. The inspiration

> behind his writing seems to be a fascinated disgust for vices whose exposure he cannot justify, since as a Calvinist believing in Predestination he appears to despair of human reformation. Nevertheless, he is eager for a fame which he despises because it can only be achieved by exploiting his own preoccupations to pander to depraved tastes. (182)

Samuel S. Schoenbaum, writing about *Antonio and Mellida,* confounds the author with Antonio, claiming that "At times the dramatist is inarticulate, occasionally he is incoherent, and quite frequently he is hysterical" (124).

Commentators such as Anthony Caputi, R. A. Foakes and Adrian Weiss, in treating the plays as satirical or parodic, provide a more constructive approach to Marston's work, and one which is consonant with his earlier satirical verse. If the plays are treated as satires or parodies, a coherent interpretation is made possible; even so, this approach does not explain why the plays have such an adverse effect on those who treat them as, to borrow Richard Levin's word, "straight". An attempt to understand what it is about Marston's plays that elicits so many negative responses leads to the realisation that, if treated as neither satirical nor parodic, the plays frequently transgress what is usually regarded as acceptable in dramatic representation.

I would suggest that one of the reasons for the frustration readers experience with Marston's work is his repeated violations of expectations. Generally, Marston utilises conventions relating to genre, characterisation, structure, plot, language and tone to the point where they create an impression

of predictability, only to subvert them once these expectations have been established, and it is this that creates confusion, if not anger, in relation to his plays. A reading of them as straight yields interesting insights into Marston's dramaturgy which do not in any way contradict the satirical or parodic interpretations of his work; such a reading can coexist with the others, offering an additional point of departure.

Ellis-Fermor's comment that the early plays are experimental deserves further examination: Marston's transgressions of convention are best discussed in the context of individual plays, but the concept of experimentation invites an approach that treats the plays as means of exploring possibilities. In her essay, "Is Gender Necessary? redux (1976/1987)", Ursula Le Guin writes of her novel, *The Left Hand Of Darkness*:

> It was a heuristic device, a thought-experiment. Physicists often do thought-experiments. Einstein shoots a light ray through a moving elevator; Schrödinger puts a cat in a box. There is no elevator, no cat, no box. The experiment is performed, the question is asked, in the mind. Einstein's elevator, Schrödinger's cat, my Gethenians, are simply a way of thinking. They are questions, not answers, process, not stasis. (9)

Marston's exploitation of conventions suggests that what Le Guin describes may offer a useful approach to his work. This is most easily explained in terms of characterisation: most of Marston's characters have, at least initially, the

flatness of character stereotypes, representing qualities rather than personalities. In the early plays, the repeated appearance of some of these character types, many of whom display an affinity for Stoicism, strongly suggests that Marston exploits the imaginative possibilities afforded by drama in order to simulate a variety of contexts in which a range of attitudes towards events can be examined.

This process of simulation relates to a Stoic concept. In his collection of essays, *Discourses Upon Seneca the Tragedian*, first published in 1601, Sir William Cornwallis writes:

> In the vanquished, debarred from all assistance of outward thinges, is there an oportunitie to shew their owne worth, . . . patience beeing a more substantiall part of Vertue, then temperance: this is left him, which should procure both patience and comfort, the exercise of the minde being to be preferred much aboue the ease of the body. This meditation, with a minde iudicially determining what ought to bee done, not what is most ordinarily done, cannot choose but learne him in calamitie, to weare that part with as much ease as he did the other: strength of the minde is able to doe more then this, whose worth, whose abilities, wee are ignorant and so destitute of, with following the beaten way of the idle vulgar. ($C2^{v}$-$C3^{r}$)

The "meditation" to which Cornwallis refers is the Stoic *praemeditatio futuri mali*, an exercise which differs from other forms of meditation in that, as R. J.

Newman puts it, "instead of anticipating some future evil, such as death, this type of meditation is an actual rehearsal for that event" (1478). Michel Foucault elaborates:

> It is an ethical, imaginary experience. . . . it is not a question of imagining the future as it is likely to turn out but to imagine the worst which can happen[,] . . . the worst as certainty, as actualising what could happen, not as calculation of probability. . . . [O]ne shouldn't envisage things as possibly taking place in the distant future but as already actual and in the process of taking place. For example, imagining not that one might be exiled but rather that one is already exiled, subjected to torture, and dying. . . . [O]ne does this not to experience inarticulate sufferings but in order to convince oneself that they are not real ills. (36)

This model offers a useful perspective: if Marston's plays are examined as though they resemble such an exercise, an interesting picture emerges. The position I am adopting is hypothetical -- I am not implying that the plays do in fact constitute a *praemeditatio futuri mali*, but arguing that Marston's interest in Stoicism allows for an interpretative application of an aspect of that philosophy. Save in the overall purpose of the use of the exercise in order to "convince oneself that they are not real ills", the plays appear to examine the consequences of responding to misfortune in a manner that makes the application of the model attractive.

The advantage of this approach lies in its facilitating a view of the plays as explorations of ideas rather than as paradigms for a particular mode of thought or action: treating the plays as heuristic devices shifts our attention from the assumption that the plays reflect a particular moral (or, as some critics would have it, immoral) stance. Instead, they can be seen as a dramatic experiment in which various responses to given situations are tested. The plays, thus approached, pose questions rather than offer solutions, challenging easy acceptance of theoretical philosophy by staging the possible consequences of adherence to such beliefs.

This presupposes the existence of characters who have the ability to engage in such an experiment, a view that is challenged by Catherine Belsey in *The Subject of Tragedy*. Taking a broad historicist view, Belsey argues that the protagonist in English morality plays is "a fragmented and fragmentary character [whose] being is dispersed across a battlefield in which his conflicting faculties struggle to possess him", concluding that "Vice and virtue take up residence within him for a time and he is no more than their consenting instrument" (15). While she acknowledges that the perception of the human subject changed considerably over the intervening years, Belsey maintains that "there are in the plays of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries intimations of the construction of a place which notions of personal identity were later to come to fill" (40). In her view, "the unified subject of liberal humanism is a product of the second half of the seventeenth century, an effect of the revolution" (33). The essence of Belsey's argument is that it is fallacious to approach characters in renaissance drama in the expectation that they will

evince consistency and control over their responses, because these characteristics are the product of a liberal humanist view of the human subject.

The capriciousness of the characters in Marston's plays might seem to support this view: in the *Antonio* plays, for example, Antonio frequently switches from elation to hysterical despair, Andrugio abandons his Stoic principles at the mere mention of the Genoese, Pandulpho abruptly announces his rejection of Stoicism directly after he has endorsed its beliefs, and Piero undergoes a metamorphosis from ineffectual blusterer to tyrannical villain. Their actions appear to vindicate Belsey's assertion that any attempt to locate continuity or consistency in these individuals is to submit to "the dominant critical tradition of an illusionist epoch [which] has read Shakespeare and his contemporaries in quest of illusionism, most obviously to find the representations of humanist subjects, 'characters'" (33).

Belsey's argument, however, does not stand up to scrutiny. In the first instance, in drawing her conclusions solely on the basis of the drama of the period, she fails to address the possibility that the apparent fragmentation of the protagonists in these plays could be a manifestation both of the allegorical nature of the moralities and also of the developing art of dramaturgy. In this respect, Belsey's argument can be seen as analogous to concluding that the ancient Egyptians had no concept of the three-dimensional nature of figures, because their paintings depict them as two-dimensional. Belsey points out that the protagonist in the morality plays "is obliged to choose the direction of his earthly pilgrimage" (16): if the protagonist makes the choices that determine the

course and the outcome of events, he or she clearly has both agency and a "self" who makes the choices.

Literature of the time of Shakespeare and his contemporaries would suggest that there was indeed a belief in the individual subject, who had a clearly defined personal identity. Stephen Gosson, writing in 1579 against what he sees as the excesses of actors, writes:

> I haue heard some Players vaunt of the credit they had in *Rome*, but they are as foolish in that, as *Vibius Rufus* which bosted himself to be an Emperor because hee had sit in *Cæsars* chair, & a perfect Orator, because hee was marryed to *Tullies* widowe. Better might they say them selues to be murderers, because they haue represented the persons of *Thyestes* and *Atreus*, *Achilles* & *Hector*: or perfect Limme lifters, for teaching the trickes of euery Strumpet. (B7^{v}-V8^{r})

Gosson's mockery of the pretensions of actors points clearly to his belief that there is a human subject who does not change in response to external trappings or events. Furthermore, if Belsey's hypothesis is correct, it is doubtful that the average reader in 1603 would have understood John Florio's translation of Montaigne's essays, which clearly posit the existence of both subjective interiority and agency. In his essay "On Solitude", for example, Montaigne tells his reader that "We have a soul able to turn in on herself; she can keep herself company; she has the wherewithal to attack, to defend, to receive and to give" (100). Emphasising the importance of solitude and meditation, Montaigne

further advises, "Let us bring our thoughts and reflections back to ourselves and to our own well-being" (101).

Stephen Greenblatt points out, citing sixteenth century writers such as More, Tyndale, Wyatt and Spenser, that there is in fact evidence of "an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process" (2). Greenblatt elaborates on the use of the word "fashioning", explaining that it "may suggest the achievement of . . . a distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving" (2), adding that "it suggests representation of one's nature or intention in speech or actions" (3). The popularity of books such as Elyot's *The Book Named The Governor*, Castiglione's *The Book of The Courtier* (translated by Thomas Hoby in 1561), and, much later, Henry Peacham's *The Compleat Gentleman*, supports Greenblatt's assertion that "there were always selves -- a sense of personal order, a characteristic mode of address to the world, a structure of bounded desires" (1).

While it may be argued that the belief in one's capacity to "fashion" one's self supports Belsey's claim that the notion that "human nature . . . is always at the most basic, the most intimate level, the same" is anachronistic when applied to writings that precede the emergence of liberal humanism (ix), the books themselves contradict this. In his introduction to Hoby's translation of *The Courtier*, Walter Raleigh comments:

> The self-assertion of the humanists was open and unashamed: man was to train himself like a racehorse, to cultivate himself like a flower,

> that he might arrive, soul and body, to such perfection as mortality may covet. This perfection had nowhere been more systematically described and defined than in the works of the ancient philosophers; and it is from Aristotle's *Ethics* that Castiglione borrows the framework of his ideal character. (lxiv)

The Book of the Courtier does not explicitly refer to the agency of the self or subject; however, the entire work is clearly based on the tacit presupposition that the reader has the capacity to cultivate the qualities, both moral and social, that it recommends. In *The Governor*, Elyot is more explicit:

> Knowledge . . . in a more brief sentence than yet hath been spoken, declareth by what mean the said precepts of reason and society may be well understood and thereby justice finally executed. The words be these in Latin, *nosce te ipsum*, which is in English know thyself. . . . [A] man knowing himself shall know that which is his own and pertaineth to himself. . . . His soul is undoubtedly and freely his own. And none other person may by any mean possess it or claim it. His body so pertaineth unto him that none other without his consent may vindicate therein any property. Of what valour or price his soul is, the similitude whereunto it was made, the immortality and life everlasting, and the powers and qualities thereof, abundantly do declare. And of that same matter and substance that his soul is of, be all other souls that now are, and have been, and ever shall be, without

> singularity or pre-eminence of nature. In semblable estate is his body, and of no better clay . . . is a gentleman made than a carter, and of liberty of will as much is given of God to the poor herdsman as to the great and mighty emperor. (164-65)

Like *The Courtier, The Governor* delineates the desirable qualities for those in positions of temporal power, based on the presupposition of self-awareness, self-possession and the capacity to consciously develop certain aspects of the self. What is also evident in *The Governor* is the presence of ideas that are frequently mentioned in the writings of the Stoics: Elyot's assertion of the intrinsic equality between people, regardless of their station in life, echoes Seneca's exhortation to Lucilius to "Remember, if you please, that the man you call slave sprang from the same seed, enjoys the same daylight, breathes like you, lives like you, dies like you. You can as easily conceive him a free man as he can conceive you a slave" (193).

H. G. Koenigsberger notes that "stoicism was taken up by some of the early fathers and assimilated into Christian thought", adding that "the continued popularity of Boëthius's Consolations of Philosophy kept Christian stoicism alive through the middle ages" (195). Of the stoic writers, Seneca was one of the most influential. His plays were popular in the schools and universities from about the middle of the sixteenth century, and, as F. L. Lucas records, not only were his plays performed, but imitations were being written (95-103). In spite of his popularity in academic institutions, the extent to which Seneca's work influenced English renaissance drama in general is subject to debate;

however, the number of Stoic characters and Senecan quotations in Marston's plays leave no doubt as to his influence there.

Marston's plays treat both self-fashioning and Stoicism in a manner which invites a closer examination of the former in terms of the latter, and suggests that an approach to the plays based on Stoic philosophy might provide a new perspective on Marston's dramaturgy. Gordon Braden comments that "By Seneca's time, the theatrical metaphor is well established as part of the furniture of classical rhetoric. . . . Theatrical language reaches into many corners of Seneca's writing" (26), and, he adds:

> Seneca bequeaths to later times some extraordinary standards for the self's ambitions and some ways of realizing those ambitions dramatically, in a rhetoric of psychic aggression that seemingly allows a character to make himself and his world up out of his own words. (62)

Not only is the theatricality of Seneca's writing appropriate in the examination of a playwright whose work is as reflexive as Marston's, but the Stoic conception of the self is equally applicable.

Seneca, in "Letter 92", defines "the happy life" as "Self-sufficiency and abiding tranquillity" (239). The way to achieve this is to live according to the basic tenets he outlines in his essay "On Tranquillity":

> We must habituate ourselves to reject ostentation and value things by their utility, not by their trappings. . . . We must learn to strengthen self-restraint, curb luxury, temper ambition, moderate anger, view poverty calmly, cultivate frugality . . . keep restive aspirations and a mind intent upon the future under lock and key, and make it our business to get our riches from ourselves rather than from Fortune. (91)

Stoicism advocates indifference towards all those things which are not subject to personal control, such as worldly possessions, public estimation, physical comfort, and even life itself. What is to be valued is "what cannot be given or taken away, what is peculiarly . . . man's. . . . It is soul, and reason perfected in the soul" (41). Because "reason holds jurisdiction over good and evil just as it does over virtue and honor" (256-57), and because passion debilitates reason, it is important that the Stoic learns to restrain strong emotions, whether they be of fear, grief, love or joy. "Only perfect reason", argues Seneca, "keeps the soul from being submissive and stands firm against Fortune; it assures self-sufficiency in whatever situation" (239).

This impervious attitude towards the world's misfortunes is what Marston's Stoic characters seek. They are not, however, portrayed as having succeeded in fashioning themselves as fully-fledged Stoics in complete control of their responses. Instead, we are presented with the hesitancy and irresolution that accompany the processes through which they arrive at particular decisions, and with their struggles to reconcile action with belief. In

this respect, it is appropriate to treat the plays as examples of *praemeditatio futuri mali*, in which Marston examines the efficacy of Stoic philosophy and, incidentally, Christian morality, in the imagined event of the worst that could happen.

Antonio and Mellida, *Antonio's Revenge* and *The Malcontent* form a group in which various correctives to the abuse of power are explored, including verbal rebukes, dissembling and violence. *The Malcontent* is generally regarded as the most approachable of Marston's early plays: whereas the *Antonio* plays contravene most theatrical conventions, "The virtue of *The Malcontent* . . . resides . . . in its freedom from the grosser faults to be expected of Marston" (T. S. Eliot, "John Marston", 228). However, it is the "faults" inherent in the Antonio plays that make them particularly interesting. *Histriomastix*, *Jacke Drum's Entertainment* and *What You Will* are significant inasmuch as they feature various dramatic idiosyncrasies that reappear in different ways in the other plays.

Notes

[1] I refer here to readers rather than audiences because, with the exception of *The Malcontent*, none of the plays examined here have been performed on stage this century, according to Michael Scott (111-13). In discussion of individual plays, I generally refer to audiences, in keeping with critical convention.

CHAPTER I.

In writing *Histriomastix*,[1] Marston used the basic form of the pageant, adapting it to suit his own purposes, with the result that the play lacks a plot, which is a violation of what is arguably one of the most fundamental of all dramatic conventions. While the result is not dramatically satisfying, it is nevertheless of interest, since it provides a key to Marston's dramaturgical practices, showing how he both employs conventions and subsequently undermines them, and how he transgresses the limits of drama, thereby drawing attention to its inherent artificiality.

In the induction to *What You Will*, Doricus remarks:

> Musike and Poetry were first approv'd
> By common scence; and that which pleased most,
> Held most allowed passe: not[2] rules of Art
> Were shapt to pleasure, not pleasure to your rules. (232)

I would argue that this comment not only encapsulates Marston's attitude towards his art, but also that it provides an essential starting point for a critical analysis of his work. *Histriomastix* is a good example of the way in which Marston shapes "the rules of Art . . . to pleasure" by selecting those elements of the pageant that he could use and incorporating in them those features of drama that he deemed appropriate.

The processional nature of pageants imposed a number of limitations on their enactment: the scenes took the form of *tableaux vivants* in which there was limited action, if any, and they generally featured either a set speech delivered by a single character or a limited exchange between several speakers. The geographical isolation of the scenes precluded any possibility of plot development or continuity of character, so that the only way the individual scenes could be logically connected with one another was through thematic unity. Although some pageants involved the use of wagons or cars which enabled individual scenes to be moved, David M. Bergeron points out that these "progress shows, not typically processional in form, remain episodic" (*English Civic Pageantry*, 7).

In *Histriomastix*, Marston utilises the *tableau vivant* of the pageant to introduce each of the six acts. Although these are not divided into separate scenes, the introductory *tableau* in all but Act 4 has the effect of a prologue, in which the theme is enunciated by the emblematic characters using the style of exchange traditionally associated with the pageant. The remainder of each act consists of a dramatisation of the theme thus introduced.

This enactment of the theme of each act is one of the important ways in which Histriomastix mixes pageant and theatrical drama: instead of the spatial separation of scenes and the concomitant lack of both temporal sequence and character continuity of the processional pageant, the single stage setting allows for a narrative development focusing on the same characters throughout the play. At the same time, the thematic emphasis of the pageant is retained, serving to limit the extent to which such development can take place. As a

result, the continuity to be found in *Histriomastix* is restricted to the effects of a cycle of events on several groups of characters, each representative of a different sector of society. These events are based on what Anthony Caputi refers to as a "Renaissance commonplace", summarised in the tag:

> Pees maketh plente.
>
> Plente maketh pryde.
>
> Pryde maketh plee.
>
> Plee maketh pouert.
>
> Pouert maketh pees. (82)

In *Histriomastix* the sequence is Peace, Plenty, Pride, Envy, War and Poverty, with a final return to Peace, to whom the others yield their sceptres after she has abdicated in favour of the newly arrived Astraea.

The stage directions are generally rudimentary: for example, that of the opening scene simply reads, "Enter *Peace, Grammer, Logick, Rhetorick, Arithmatick, Geometrie, Musick, and Astronomie*" (I.247). The direct indebtedness of the scene to earlier pageants featuring the Seven Liberal Arts[3] suggests that the stage settings for the various *tableaux vivants* would have owed much to the spectacular tradition of those in processional pageants or progress shows. In addition, the dialogue is interspersed with frequent songs, a procession presided over by Plenty, a market scene revealed by the drawing of a curtain, a number of dramatic performances by a company of amateur actors, a morris-dance, a masque, a duel, a popular insurrection and a civil war. In performance, this

somewhat daunting amount of pure spectacle would doubtless have easily compensated for the lack of development in plot and character.

In his "Letter of the Authors" which prefaces *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser explained why he attempted to make his work "pleasing":

> To some I know this Methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather haue good discipline deliuered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they vse, then thus clowdily enwrapped in Allegoricall deuises. But such, me seeme, should be satisfide with the vse of these dayes seeing all things accounted by their showes, and nothing esteemed of, that is not delightfull and pleasing to commune sence. (16)

Philip Sidney states more plainly, "Poesy therefore is an art of imitation . . . with this end, to teach and delight" (139). In keeping with these ideals, Marston's extensive use of visual and aural delights serves as the vehicle for the conveyance of a serious didactic message. The play examines the effects of the vicissitudes of Fortune on people's moral behaviour both as individuals and as members of society. The satirical nature of the dialogue and the action draws attention to the problem being examined, but fails to offer a solution. Thematically, the play ends with the return of Peace to the throne, suggesting the renewal of the cycle by returning to the situation of the opening act. The last-minute arrival of Astraea and Queen Elizabeth, together with Peace's abdication in favour of Astraea, is dramatically unsatisfying: between the reign

of Peace at the beginning of the play and her return in the final scene, there is no evidence of the kind of behavioural change in the characters that would warrant the cycle being broken. As a result, this scene works against the moral thrust of the play, suggesting that not only is the cycle of fortune and misfortune inexorable, but it can be broken only by the fortuitous intervention of external powers. As a piece of moral didacticism, the play undermines its own purpose, which is clearly to demonstrate the unacceptability of the behaviour dramatised in the preceding acts.

At the same time, this subversion is characteristic of Marston's work, and it highlights his attack on the limits and conventions of drama. His use of verisimilitude is eccentric: the characters he draws are flat and stereotypical where those of contemporary dramatists create the illusion of individuality, yet the situations he depicts tend to bear an unsettling resemblance to real life. Convention demands that, within the world of a play, actions have related consequences, and that characters can effect significant change; in life away from the stage, events take place regardless of individual effort, and the good frequently go unrewarded.

It has been suggested that Marston has proffered an escape from this bleak vision in the character of Chrisoganus. David Farley-Hills writes:

> Chrisoganus, as George Geckle points out, means "golden born" and would seem to be a masculine equivalent of Spenser's Chrysogonee, who in Book III of *The Faerie Queene* is represented as the mother of Belphoebe (symbolising the chaste virtue of the Virgin Queen) and

> herself of divine origin. The complex of ideas is meant to suggest that the scholar Chrisoganus-Marston has the divine light that will lead him and us to the sacred truths that it is the artist's function to reveal. (*Jacobean Drama*, 47-48)

Geckle sees Chrisoganus as "the first of Marston's educated social critics and political leaders" (47). Yet a detailed examination of Chrisoganus's speeches shows that, as John Scott Colley (37) and Alvin Kernan (137) correctly point out, Chrisoganus is as much the object of satire as are those against whom he rails. In the opening act, Mavortius and Philarchus ask Chrisoganus, who has been appointed by Peace to act as their tutor, to explain why they should study the liberal arts, arguing, in view of Socrates's remark that "*I know I nothing know*" (I.249), that truth is unattainable. Chrisoganus's reply is lengthy, but can be roughly paraphrased as, "if we have knowledge we must necessarily have truth: perfect certainty in our knowledge is sufficient". This does not answer the question, and Philarchus expresses his dissatisfaction, saying, "I am not satisfied in this" (I.250).

Later in the same act, the lawyers, Fourcher and Voucher, and the merchants, Velure and Lyon-rash, consult Chrisoganus in his study. Velure asks the scholar, "What difference is there twixt *philosophy* / And knowledge which is *Mathematicall?*" (I.252). Chrisoganus replies:

> the naturall Philosopher

Considers things as meerely sensible;

The *Mathematician; ut mente abiunctas a materia sensibili,*

[tr. the mathematician considers them as separated from sensible matter]

But this requireth time to satisfy;

For 'tis an *Axiome* with all men of Art,

Mathematicum abstrahentem non comittere mendacium:

[tr. the mathematician making abstractions does not construct a lie][4]

(I.252)

But rather than taking the "time to satisfy", Chrisoganus launches into a lengthy and confusing description of astronomy. It would appear that he is more concerned with impressing his auditors with the range of his knowledge than with actually imparting any of it.

It is significant that when the merchants and lawyers ask him if he is willing to act as their tutor, Chrisoganus replies, "To make you Artists, answeres my desire, / Rather then hope of mercenary hire" (I.254). When, during the reign of Plenty, the lords dismiss him as their tutor, he takes his leave of them saying, "pooer Art shall weare a glorious crowne, / When her despisers die to all renowne" (II.258). However, his devotion to learning lasts only as long as he has audiences willing to tolerate his lectures. The next time he appears, in Act III, during the reign of Pride, he has forsaken his study, and is trying to sell a play he has written for ten pounds (III.273). In view of the fact that the prospective buyers have their own resident poet, Posthast, who charges only

two shillings (II.259), Chrisoganus can be seen, with justification, as being as vulnerable to inordinate self-esteem as any of those who have been infected with pride. He has also obviously abandoned his stance of not seeking "mercenary hire".

In the final act we see Chrisoganus for the hypocrite that he is. Mavortius and Philarchus, humbled by their experience, again converse with their erstwhile tutor, Philarchus asking him, "How canst thou teach us . . . tranquillity?" (VI.295). Chrisoganus replies:

> When thou wast rich and Peerlesse in thy pride,
> . . . . . .
> . . . skillesse grudging from a haughty spirit
> Did blind thy sences with a slender merit.
> Whil'st I (poore man) not subject to such thought
> Gave entertaine to those sweet blessed babes,
> Which Sapience brought from Wisedomes holy brest,
> And thought me rich to have their company.
> By nursing them in Peace I shun'd all Sloth,
> Nor yet did *Plenty* make me prodigall:
> *Pride* I abhor'd and term'd the Beggers shield:
> Nor ever did base *Envie* touch my heart. (VI.296)

Chrisoganus's behaviour in the preceding acts exposes his hypocrisy. As has been noted, his pride leads him to overvalue his work; the price he asks for his

play suggests that he has not been unaffected by the prodigality of Plenty. When the players refuse to buy his play, his response clearly suggests wounded pride. "I hope to see you starve and storme for bookes", he rails, adding, "Write on, crie on, yawle to the common sort / Of thickskin'd auditours" (III.273), yet when he was trying to negotiate a price for his work, Chrisoganus showed no concern for the type of audience before whom his play would be performed.

In similar fashion, his claim that he has never been affected by envy is demonstrably untrue. He is able to maintain this only because none of the other characters is present when he exclaims:

> O! I could wish my selfe consum'd in aire,
> When I behold these huge fat lumpes of flesh,
> These big-bulkt painted postes, that senceless stand,
> To have their backes pasted with dignity,
> Quite choaking up all passage to respect. (IV.281-82)

Chrisoganus himself recognises his susceptibility to envy: he ends the soliloquy saying, "Poore foole, leave prating, envy not their shine" (IV.282).

While the other characters in the play are also treated satirically, at the same time they suggest an appropriate response to Chrisoganus. Mavortius, responding to Chrisoganus's vituperation when the nobles decide to discontinue their lessons with him, retorts angrily:

> How you translating-scholler? you can make
> A stabbing *Satir*, or an *Epigram*,
> And thinke you carry just *Ramnusia's whippe*
> To lash the patient. (II.257-58)

In a lighter vein, Gutt, the Fiddle-string-maker turned player comments, "Is this the well-learned man *Chrisoganus*, / He beats the Ayre the best that ere I heard" (III.274).

While Chrisoganus is undoubtedly accurate in much of his criticism of the others, it does not necessarily follow that he is an example of perfect rectitude himself. Philip J. Finkelpearl remarks of Marston:

> what appears to have energized his wits was a feeling of anger at or disdain for anything which enslaved or inhibited. His plays are filled with creatures whom philosophical codes, or passions, or fashions in clothing, manners, or language have blocked from acting naturally or freely. (258)

Chrisoganus is just such a "creature". His self-appointed role of social critic inhibits his ability to participate in society on any terms except those he sets. Marston presents us with a more complex situation than one in which the only character capable of recognising the ills of society is a paragon of virtue: rather, we are presented with what amounts to a direct challenge to an uncritical acceptance of the biblical question, "why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy

brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" (Matthew 7:3). Chrisoganus's perception of the society in which he lives in is not flawed; the faults he criticises are clearly there. The play dares us to dismiss his insight on the grounds that he himself is not without faults, a challenge which has as much validity today as it had in Marston's time.

Chrisoganus is the first of a series of characters in Marston's plays who display a discrepancy between principles and practice. An example of a character in the process of fashioning himself, he is illustrative of the type of expectations we have of drama: while we are able to accept the indecision of a character such as Hamlet, we are not as well disposed to a character whose faults are emphasised as are those of Chrisoganus. Dramatic convention does not generally encompass the dramatisation of characters' aspirations while at the same time showing the distance between those aspirations and reality.

Structurally, *Histriomastix* calls to mind renaissance emblem books, in which there is a picture at the top of the page, with a descriptive verse below it. Marston seems to have attempted to create this effect in a theatrical form. Links between the emblems are provided by having the same characters enacting the effects of each state depicted at the outset of the act. Further links are provided during the acts: in each dramatised section there is some reference, either in speech or in action, to the next section. For example, in act I, Incle says, "This Peace breeds such Plenty, trades serve no turnes" (250), and at the end of the act, Peace leads in Plenty, abdicating in her favour before act II begins with Plenty's representative tableau. Pride, likewise, is anticipated in the arrogance of the Italian lord, Landulpho, during the players' performance, when

he extols the virtues of Italian theatre to his hosts, punctuating his speech with parenthetical repetitions of the phrase, "Alwaies commending English curtesie" (II.266). We are led to expect the arrival of Envy during the exchange between Mavortius and his steward after the refusal of the players to perform for less than ten pounds, (no doubt having been inspired by Chrisoganus's demand for that amount for his script), when Mavortius comments that "though the penny raisd them to the pound, / Just *Envie* doth still confound" (III.276). Envy arrives unaccompanied, at the end of this act.

As if to emphasise the insidiousness of envy, the fourth act alone starts without an emblematic *tableau*: instead, we are simply shown the characters consumed with envy for one another. The aptly named Mavortius (Mars) introduces War, the ruler of the fifth act, when, in response to his wife's expressions of envy, he says:

> Content thee sweet, the lightning of my armes,
> Shall purge the aire of these grosse foggy clouds,
> That doe obscure our births bright radiance,
> When Iron *Mars* mounts up his plumy Crest,
> The Law and Merchandize in rust may rest,
> Then *Envy* cease; for e're the Sonne shall set,
> Ile buckle on *Mavortius* burganet. (IV.281)

Preparation for the arrival of Poverty is provided in the speech of the lawyer, Voucher, who remarks that "we are sure to feele / The fury of the tempest

when it comes. / The Law and Merchandize may both go begge" (V.290). The re-entry of Peace is hinted at in the action in VI, with the reconciliation between the nobles and Chrisoganus. However, the arrival of Astraea and Queen Elizabeth is not prepared for at all, and perhaps it is this departure from the structural pattern of the rest of the play, together with the way in which it subverts the moral direction already mentioned, that makes its conclusion so unsatisfying.

Histriomastix is, finally, noticeably reflexive, another feature that recurs in Marston's later plays. The entire play tends to turn in on itself; the depiction of the tradesmen who conclude that "*Peace* breeds such Plenty, trades serve no turnes" (I, 250), and decide to form a "company of players", draws attention to the fact that *Histriomastix* is itself performed by a company of amateur players. The paucity of the plot, together with the rudimentary characterisation of most of the *dramatis personae* suggest that the performers of the play, like the dramatised company of players, "(with practice) soone may learne to play" (I, 250). When the players perform in front of the nobles, the pastiche of genres they present reflects the eclecticism of *Histriomastix* itself: the players' performance of "*Troylus and Cressida*" begins as a romance, only to be interrupted after eleven lines by the entry of "a roaring *Divell* with the Vice on his back, *Iniquity* in one hand; and *Juventus* in the other" (II.265), while *Histriomastix* mixes pageantry with theatrical drama, and mockery with seriousness. This generic indeterminacy is yet another recurring feature in Marston's later plays, and one which has generated a considerable amount of critical confusion.

What is perhaps the most daring instance of reflexivity in the play is Marston's lampoonery of Chrisoganus. By making his satiric commentator the object of his satire, Marston inevitably calls attention to his own position in relation to the play, reminding us of his previous occupation as satirist. A striking feature of Marston's work is the way readers are repeatedly reminded of the author: for example, it is commonly assumed that one of the portraits presented on the stage in *Antonio and Mellida*, V.i, is that of Marston himself, and that when the couple speak to each other in Italian (AM, IV.i.189-206), it is on account of Marston's mother being Italian.[5] While I disagree with these interpretations, there is nevertheless a quality of self-reflexivity that punctuates Marston's work, and perhaps the funniest of these is Gutt's comment about Posthast, the poet turned playwright: "It is as dangerous to read his name at a playe-dore / As a printed bill on a plague dore" (IV.282). It is difficult, in this context, to ignore the fact that, like Posthast, Marston is a poet turned playwright.

Notes.

[1]. All references to *Histriomastix, Jacke Drum's Entertainment* and *What You Will* are to the H. Harvey Wood edition, *The Plays of John Marston*, (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1934-1939) 243-302. Wood does not provide line numbers or scene divisions, so all references are to act and page numbers. The plays are located respectively as follows:

Histriomastix. Vol. III, 243-302.

Jacke Drum's Entertainment. Vol. III, 173-234.

What You Will. Vol. II, 227-94.

[2]. Wood notes: "Marginal MS. correction in B 'your' 1633 'no' vol. II.232.

[3]. Glynne Wickham, in *Early English Stages 1300 to 1600*, vol. I. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), writes that Lydgate's pageant in honour of Henry in 1432 featured a "pageant-stage [which] presented Dame Sapience attended by the Seven Liberal Sciences" (77). Wickham further notes that in February 1546 a similar display was mounted in honour of Edward VI's coronation (78).

[4]. I am indebted to Alison Holcroft, Department of Classics, University of Canterbury, for these translations.

[5]. See, for example, respective footnotes in *Antonio and Mellida.* Ed. W. Reavley Gair (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1991). 137, n.223-4 and 143, n.11, 12-13.

CHAPTER 2.

Conventional generic categorisation exerts a considerable influence on the way a play is approached. In the induction to *Antonio and Mellida*, Antonio refers to the play as "this comedy" (*AM* Ind. 144-45).[1] This leads us to expect a play in which, as Abrams puts it, "the characters and their discomfitures engage out pleasurable attention rather than our profound concern, we are made to feel confident that no great disaster will occur, and usually the action turns out happily for the chief characters" (28-29). Obviously this definition is a broad generalisation; the point is that, although not all comedies will conform to it exactly, it does supply the broad parameters that distinguish a comedy from other genres.

One of the problems facing the reader of *Antonio and Mellida* is that the play resists critical consensus concerning its generic form, as a brief survey of some of the literature shows: in a debate published in *Essays in Criticism*, R. A. Foakes's assertion that the play is a parody (July 1972, 327-29) is strongly contested by Richard Levin, who insists that there is no evidence to support this claim (July 1974, 312-16). Michael Scott (22) and Allen Bergson (309) see the play as satirical and "comic-satiric" respectively. In his introduction to the play, W. Reavley Gair comments that it "is both a 'historical-comical' and an illustration of the kind of play Marston is capable of writing and of the type this new company, the Children of Paul's, is capable of performing. . . . [T]he

audience is . . . made conscious of the formation and training of the acting company performing the play" (25).

While these diverse opinions may seem to be no more than evidence of the number of ways in which the play can be interpreted, they nevertheless point to a fundamental source of critical discomfort: if we do not know what type of play *Antonio and Mellida* is, we are necessarily uncertain about how we ought to respond to it. In this manner, the play demonstrates the extent to which interpretation and understanding depend on categorisation. Examination of the play in the light of a variety of critical interpretations shows that it is possible to regard it as simultaneously straightforward, parodic and satirical, allowing for the distinction between parody and satire described by Leon Guilhamet: "The method of imitating another form in satire is parody. Parody of itself, though, does not constitute satire" (14). Moreover, Gair's suggestion that it showcases the talents of both Marston and the Children of Paul's is also convincing.

The strongest argument in support of the parodic interpretation of the play is provided in the induction, when the principle actors discuss the manner in which they ought to perform their parts, Piero having confessed, "Faith, we can say our parts, but we are ignorant in what mould we must cast our actors" (*AM* Ind. 3-4). In "John Marston's Fantastical Plays", R. A. Foakes claims that the stereotypical acting styles described by the actors make it obvious "that the play to follow will parody old ranting styles, make the children out-strut the adult tragedians . . . and burlesque common conventions" (229-30). Comments such as Feliche's "Rampum, scrampum, mount tufty Tamburlaine!" (*AM* Ind.

91), and Antonio's concern that "when use hath taught me action to hit the right point of a lady's part, I shall grow ignorant, when I must turn young prince again, how but to truss my hose" (*AM* Ind. 81-83), draw attention to the adult theatres: in Feliche's case, to what Gair calls "a now unfashionable acting style of excessive and highflown rhetoric" (Intro. 65n.), while Antonio's complaint serves as a reminder that in adult theatres, female parts were invariably played by boys. In addition, Antonio's comment can be seen as a light mockery of those who shared the belief expressed by Philip Stubbes:

> It is writte in the 22 of *Deuteronomie*, that what man so euer weareth womans apparel is accursed, and what woman weareth mans apparel is accursed also. Now, whether they be within the bands and lymits of that cursse, let them see to it them selues. Our Apparell was giuen us as a signe distinctiue to discern betwixt sex and sex, & therfore one to weare the Apparel of another sex, is to participate with the same, and to adulterate the veritie of his owne kinde. (F5v)

At the same time, as Adrian Weiss argues, the induction highlights "the school performance tradition and its essential features as they relate to Marston's use of his boy-actors" (83). Weiss demonstrates that the discussion in the induction serves to illustrate that the actors have a sound knowledge of rhetorical theory, showing that they are able not only to identify stereotypes using "standard techniques for the rhetorical figure *descriptio personis*", but also to add "dominant rhetorical figures or stylistic traits . . . to the stereotype

identifications" (85). In a persuasive argument, Weiss insists that this parading of rhetorical expertise, like the references to costume, gesture, and acting itself, serves "not to direct audience consciousness beyond Paul's. . . . Rather, the Induction's parameters are restricted to the Paul's environment itself" by virtue of the actors' exhibition of familiarity with subjects learnt in school (83-84). Weiss points out that there are further references to these subjects within the body of the play, and he concurs with Gair that the extent to which music features once more calls attention to the "boys' real-world identities as choristers" (90).

Neither of these interpretations need necessarily exclude the other. The induction to *Antonio and Mellida*, like those of *Jacke Drum's Entertainment* and *What You Will*, functions to place the audience simultaneously inside and outside the dramatic illusion. In *Antonio and Mellida*, the induction draws attention to both the private theatrical tradition of Paul's and the wider, public stage while Alberto's satirical observations extend the field of reference beyond the stage to encompass society in general. Having described to Piero the style of acting his part requires, Alberto remarks:

> Such rank custom is grown popular.
> And now the vulgar fashion strides as wide
> And stalks as proud upon the weakest stilts
> Of the slight'st fortunes as if Hercules
> Or burly Atlas shouldered up their state. (*AM* Ind. 15-19)

When Antonio expresses doubts as to his ability to play "two parts in one" (*AM* Ind. 70-71), Alberto rejoins: "Not play two parts in one? Away, away, 'tis common fashion. Nay, if you cannot bear two subtle fronts under one hood, idiot, go by, go by, off this world's stage! O time's impurity!" (*AM* Ind. 77-80). While Alberto's observations are not in the ranting style of, for example, Chrisoganus in *Histriomastix*, the satirical tone is nevertheless unmistakable, in that Alberto "uses laughter as a weapon, and against a butt that exists outside the work itself" (Abrams, 187).

The body of the play, like the Induction, simultaneously sustains readings that perceive it as satirical, parodic and straightforward. This is partly because the tension created by the juxtaposition of the serious with the comic tends to undermine each, yet at no point does the play become unequivocally either one or the other. This lack of equilibrium is accentuated by the staging of uncharacteristic actions after characters have been established as recognisable, conventional types, and by the way in which the comic subplot repeatedly contradicts the dominant mood of the main plot.

Characterisation in *Antonio and Mellida* is puzzling, creating the impression of either inconsistency or disjointedness. Antonio's hyperbolic language and histrionic behaviour are not easy to reconcile with the evidence that his behaviour represents genuine emotional turmoil and that his solutions are in fact effective. For example, the advantages he enjoys as a result of his decision to adopt a female disguise in order to "purchase [his] adorèd Mellida" (*AM* I.i.29) become apparent as the first two acts proceed. In the first instance, the

disguise enables him to approach the Venetian court, where he can make direct contact with Mellida without having to present himself to Piero. As a "female" stranger, he is welcomed without suspicion, and is able to participate fully in court life without having to establish the credentials generally required of male visitors. Moreover, by virtue of his disguise, Antonio is able to remain behind after the entertainment provided for Galeatzo and Matzagente, and disclose his true identity to Mellida after Piero and the rest of the court retire to bed (*AM* II.i.266-313).

The difficulty in recognising the effectiveness of Antonio's approach to his problems results from the manner in which they are presented: we are left uncertain whether we should treat Antonio as a serious or a satirical figure. Leon Guilhamet, in his study of satire, suggests that one of its identifying characteristics is when the "rhetorical structure or logical sequence of a . . . speech or discourse is excessively disrupted. . . . [resulting in] a malformation or deformation of the text" (12-13). This can usefully be applied to the sequence of events described, which is disrupted by incongruity of both tone and action. Antonio's story of how he, as Florizel, met the injured Antonio, is told in the high-flown language of epic:

> Sailing some two months with inconstant winds,
> We viewed the glistering Venetian forts
> To which we made, when, lo, some three leagues off,
> We might descry a horrid spectacle:

> The issue of black fury strewed the sea
> With tattered carcasses of splitted ships,
> Half-sinking, burning, floating, topsy-turvy. (*AM* I.i.194-200)

This tone is abruptly dispelled when Antonio interrupts himself to ask Mellida inanely, "Why sigh you, fair?" (*AM* I.i.206) when she, predictably, reacts to the news that the dying Antonio mentioned her name and then fainted. Antonio resumes his story, only to have the mood deflated once more, this time by Rosaline, who asks him, "Why weeps the soft-hearted Florizel?" (*AM* I.i.235), when it is perfectly obvious that he is moved by the nature of the tale he is telling. It could be argued that these interruptions are tacit stage directions, but elsewhere in the play, Marston shows no aversion to interrupting a passage in order to insert an explicit direction -- for example, in the following scene, Catzo's speech is interrupted in this manner (*AM* II.i.21-23). Rather, the interruptions highlight the incongruity of the scene: Antonio, who is clearly alive and safe, moves himself to tears in concocting a fictional story about himself. Even though his behaviour is in complete accord with his disguise as Florizel, it is nevertheless difficult to find an appropriate response to the scene. Its comic aspects are at odds with the tragic tone of Antonio's tale. Moreover, although Antonio is in no immediate danger, he would be killed if discovered, Piero having proclaimed that "whosoever brings Andrugio's head, / Or young Antonio's, shall be guerdoned / With twenty thousand double pistolets" (*AM* I.i.69-71). The seriousness of Piero's threat to Antonio's life and the comic

elements already noted, together with the ambiguous characterisation of Piero himself, further undermine the possibility of an unequivocal response.

The appearance of the two suggestively named pages, Catzo and Dildo, prepares us for the comic bawdry that dominates most of the second act. By the time the dance is staged and Antonio expresses his passionate anger at Galeatzo's and Matzagente's courtship of Mellida, the preceding action has disrupted the predominant tone of the first act, and implanted doubts as to how seriously we should take Antonio's display of emotion. Act II, while not being divided into scenes, consists of three distinct movements, each following a similar pattern. Initially, Dildo and Catzo flirt with Mellida's gentlewoman, Flavia, in an exchange marked with sexual innuendo. Following this, Rosaline is courted by Balurdo and Castilio, with Feliche participating in the role of satirical commentator. Rosaline matches her suitors' crassness with coarse vulgarity, spitting on the ground and commanding that Castilio "rub out my rheum. It soils the presence" (*AM* II.i.86-87). When he obsequiously replies, "By my wealthiest thought, you grace my shoe with an unmeasured honour" (*AM* II.i.88-89), she responds, "I'll spit in thy mouth, an thou wilt, to grace thee" (*AM* II.i.91). Feliche accurately if inelegantly articulates the impression created by this exchange, saying "O that the stomach of this queasy age / Digests or brooks such raw unseasoned gobs / And vomits not them forth!" (*AM* II.i.92-94). His commentary can be seen in two ways: as purely satirical criticism of the other characters, or as a means of leading in to the contrasting behaviour of the virtuous lovers which follows this section. The text supplies no clear indication as to the dramatic purpose of his invective.

Alberto's vexed response to his rivals foreshadows Antonio's discomfort when faced with his competitors for Mellida's affections. When Alberto arrives in search of Rosaline, both Castilio and Balurdo tell him, "My mistress, the Lady Rosaline, withdrew her gracious aspect even now" (*AM* II.i.136-37 and 138-39). He exclaims, "My mistress, and his mistress, and your mistress, and the dog's mistress -- precious dear heaven, that Alberto lives to have such rivals!" (*AM* II.i.141-43). Antonio's "O eyes, why leap you not like thunderbolts / Or cannon bullets in my rivals' face?" (*AM* II.i.208-09) expresses a similar sentiment.

The final section of this act repeats the pattern established in the previous two segments, increasing the number of characters participating in it. The effect is similar to that of a musical crescendo: Mellida, Rosaline and Flavia are all present, each with two suitors. Mellida is accompanied by Galeatzo and Matzagente, Rosaline by Balurdo and Alberto, and Flavia by Feliche and Castilio. At first Mellida reacts to Matzagente's courtship with anger, telling him, "My thoughts are as black as your beard, my fortunes as ill-proportioned as your legs, and all the powers of my mind as leaden as your wit and as dusty as your face is swarthy" (*AM* II.i.175-178), but when Galeatzo treats what she has said as a witty joke, her mood changes to one of grief: "Forbear! / There's not a vacant corner of my heart, / But all is filled with dead Antonio's loss. / Then urge no more" (*AM* II.i.183-86). The change in Mellida's tone is marked also by a change in register: whereas she addresses Matzagente in prose, the seriousness of her response to Galeatzo is marked by the formality of blank verse. When Antonio, angered by the importunity of the two princes, falls on

the ground, it appears that he has successfully staged a distraction, putting an end to their advances. However, Alberto's bemused "What means the lady fall upon the ground?" (*AM* II.i.211) and his ensuing exchange with Rosaline contradict the serious tone of the action concerning Antonio and Mellida, resulting in confusion as to how to respond.

As the play develops, Antonio seems to have a propensity for falling, making it increasingly difficult to take his actions seriously. I use the word "seems" because the stage directions have, in all instances but one, been inserted editorially. It is worth briefly digressing on this subject, because editorial insertions and alterations shed some light on Marston's dramaturgy and its effect on readers. In the case of the falling incidents, Marston provides only one stage direction, when Antonio addresses the unrecognised Mellida thus:

> I am not for thee if thou canst not rave,
>
> *Antonio falls on the ground.*
>
> Fall flat on the ground, and thus exclaim on heaven:
>
> 'O trifling Nature, why inspir'dst thou breath?' (*AM* IV.i.163-65)

He is clearly enacting what he is saying, and the stage direction is neutral. The same cannot be said of the other three stage directions: Dilke inserted "*He throws himself to the ground*" (*AM* II.i.210.1), Hunter, "*Antonio casts himself down*" (*AM* III.ii.193.2), and Bullen, "*He casts himself down*" (*AM* IV.i.27.1). The verbs employed by these editors are not free of connotations which subtly direct the reader to view Antonio as a hysterical caricature.

Not only do interventions such as these influence interpretation, but in two instances, it is not clear from the context that Antonio does in fact fall. The first is when Mellida tells Antonio she has lost his note, and that people are approaching her chamber (*AM* III.ii.192-3). Feliche offers Antonio solace, to which Antonio responds, "I care not" (*AM* III.ii.198), and, "I prithee, let me lie" (*AM* III.ii.200). There is no textual indication that this last utterance is to be taken literally; "lie" also means "Be or remain in a specified position of subjection, helplessness, misery, degradation . . . etc" (*OED.* lie v^1 B I 3.a). Likewise, Bullen assumes that when Antonio says "Clod upon clod thus fall" (*AM* IV.i.27), he refers to his own body as a "clod" and physically enacts his words. While these interpretations are feasible, they are by no means the only ones possible, and their inclusion in the play in the form of stage directions imposes a particular point of view on the work.

Even if it is accepted that Antonio does in fact fall to the ground on these occasions, the language employed in the stage directions is still objectionable in that it militates against a serious interpretation of Antonio's behaviour. Taking Bullen's interpolation, the context suggests that Antonio is in a state of extreme distress. Disguised as a sailor, he escapes from Piero's court on the pretext of searching for the fugitive Antonio (AM III.ii.237.1-248). The comic ambiguity of his running onto the stage, shouting, "Stop, stop Antonio! Stay Antonio!" (AM IV.i.1) ends abruptly with his expression of doubt concerning his identity:

> Vain breath, vain breath, Antonio's lost.

He cannot find himself, not seize himself.

Alas, this that you see is not Antonio.

. . . . . .

Conceit you me as, having clasped a rose

Within my palm, the rose being ta'en away,

My hand retains a little breath of sweet;

So may man's trunk, his spirit slipped away,

Hold still a faint perfume of his sweet guest. (AM IV.i.2-4; 13-17)

This disintegration of his identity is followed, in earlier editions of the play, by a concomitant lapse into aphasia and, since Bullen, a physical fall:

O, this is naught but speckling melancholy.

I have been --

That Morpheus tender skinp -- Cousin german --

Bear with me good –

Mellida -- Clod upon clod thus fall. (Ed. G.K. Hunter. AM IV.i.24-28)

In the Gair text, which closely follows that of MacDonald P. Jackson and Michael Neill, this speech is changed to read:

O, this is nought but speckling melancholy

That morphews tender skin. I have been
Cousin german -- bear with me, good Mellida --
Clod upon clod thus fall. (AM IV.i.24-27)

While this editing renders the speech more comprehensible, I would argue that it is contrary to the sense of the scene, which shows that as Antonio's personality disintegrates, so his speech becomes incoherent, emphasising the violent dislocation of sensibility he is experiencing. To alter the speech from the original detracts from this effect, again suggesting that Antonio should not be treated with seriousness. It is an attempt to make Marston's play conform to a greater extent to convention, in this instance that which dictates that the language in a play should make sense.

Antonio is not the only character who falls; his father, Andrugio, does so too on one occasion (*AM* III.i.40.1). In every instance, the anguish they express is convincing. The situations in which they find themselves are unquestionably disastrous, so unless *Antonio and Mellida* is to be regarded as purely farcical or parodic, another explanation for their behaviour must be sought. While the play does contain some elements of farce, the nature of the action concerning the hatred between Antonio and Andrugio and their enemy, Piero, is of the utmost seriousness. This gives weight to the proposition that what is being dramatised when Andrugio and Antonio fall to the ground, and Antonio lapses into aphasia, is an attempt to reproduce on the stage a degree of emotion that exceeds what can be borne without derangement of some sort.

Our bewilderment and discomfort when presented with this behaviour are evidence that this goes beyond the limits of what can effectively be dramatised.

A further instance in which the limitations of drama are highlighted is when Antonio, having conversed with the disguised Mellida in the marsh, finally realises her true identity, and the couple express their mutual joy in Italian (*AM* IV.i.189-206). As the falling incidents and Antonio's disjointed speech have shown the difficulty in dramatising extreme emotions, so this incident suggests the inadequacy of language as well as drama in this respect. We cannot understand what the lovers say because their feelings cannot be rendered in ordinary words. At the same time there is also a suggestion that it is inappropriate that we should be privy to what they say to each other. We are denied the satisfaction of vicarious participation in this moment, as is emphasised by the page who, although he begins facetiously, saying, "I think confusion of Babel is fallen upon these lovers, that they change their language" (*AM* IV.i.217-18), makes the point at the end of his speech: "But howsoever, if I should sit in judgement, 'tis an error easier to be pardoned by the auditors than excused by the authors, and yet some private respect may rebate the edge of keener censure" (*AM* IV.i.222-25). Editorial glosses suggest that this speech is a reference to Marston in his capacity of author, concerning his personal life and the fact that his mother was Italian. W. Reavley Gair renders it: "this error (of writing in Italian) is more easily forgiven by the audience than excused by the author, but servile criticism may be toned down by the personal knowledge of individuals (probably that Marston had an Italian mother)" (*AM* IV.1.223-25n.). G. K. Hunter similarly suggests that "strong objection may be tempered

for some personal reasons" (*AM* IV.i.224-27n.), and Jackson and Neill comment, "harsher judgement may be qualified by some personal considerations -- presumably a reference to Marston's half-Italian birth" (*AM* IV.i.216-20n.). The only relevance Marston's mother's nationality has is that it probably governed his choice of Italian rather than another language for this exchange. What matters is that the speech is incomprehensible to the average English speaker. Although Jackson and Neill note "authors = originators" (*AM* IV.i.216-20), both Gair and Hunter rest their interpretations on the assumption that there is a possessive apostrophe missing in the word "authors". The most obvious authors (plural) of this language are Antonio and Mellida, and we are being reminded that what they say to each other is none of our business: we are to excuse their language out of respect for their privacy.

The characterisation of Andrugio and, to a lesser extent, Feliche, is another instance in which *Antonio and Mellida* flouts convention, and it is in Andrugio that we see evidence of self-fashioning. Both Andrugio and Feliche can be described as endorsing Stoic principles, yet they are shown in situations in which their actions compromise their beliefs. In Feliche's case, his satirical criticism of Rosaline and her two suitors, Balurdo and Castilio (*AM* II.i.55-102), and his invective towards Alberto when he seeks Rosaline (*AM* II.i.133-155) are exposed as the bitter envy of a man who is himself unsuccessful with women. When he encounters Castilio during the night and the latter claims that he "cannot rest / For ladies' letters that importune [him] / With . . . vehemence of love / Straight to solicit them" (*AM* III.ii.65-68), Feliche belies his earlier claim to "envy none, but hate or pity all" (*AM* III.ii.47), confessing:

I have put on good clothes and smudged my face,
Struck a fair wench with a smart speaking eye,
Courted in all sorts, blunt and passionate,
Had opportunity, put them to the 'ah!',
And, by this light, I find them wondrous chaste,
Impregnable -- perchance a kiss or so,
But for the rest, O, most inexorable! (*AM* III.ii.84-90)

Any inclination we may have to empathise with Feliche's amatory failures has been pre-empted by his exclaiming to Castilio, "Lord, how I clap my hands and smooth my brow, / Rubbing my quiet bosom, tossing up / A grateful spirit to omnipotence" (*AM* III.ii.59-61). This ecstasy of contentment is uncomfortably reminiscent of Richard III's "I thank God for my humility" (*R3*, II.i.74). However, regardless of how unlikeable Feliche may be, what is being shown is a weakness that is perfectly familiar in the daily world outside the theatre: while he subscribes to the tenets of Stoicism, he does not always succeed in living by them. This highlights our tendency to demand characterisation that reflects an ideal, rather than mundane reality. It is possible that this is necessary in drama: the brevity of a theatrical performance makes it difficult to show characters in any truly mimetic fashion, and the attempt to do so results in the appearance of fragmentation and inconsistency.

Andrugio's belief in Stoic principles is more clearly delineated than that of Feliche, and his failure to live up to them is consequently more striking. It is possible to see a progressive reconciliation with his ideals when he falls to the

ground in despair and Lucio prompts him to the train of thought that leads him to his conclusion that

> There's nothing left
> Unto Andrugio but Andrugio,
> And that nor mischief, force, distress, nor hell can take.
> Fortune my fortunes, not my mind, shall shake. (*AM* III.i.60-63)

The gap between his principles and his practice becomes apparent when he catalogues the kingly qualities deriving from detachment from worldly influences, only to react to Lucio's reference to the Genoese with a comic vehemence that disrupts the serious vein of what he has being saying. "Name not the Genoese!", he exclaims, "That very word / Unkings me quite, makes me vile passion's slave" (*AM* IV.i.67-8). As with Antonio and Feliche, Andrugio can be perceived as an inconsistently delineated satirical or parodic character, but that implies an insistence on conventions that demand a particular kind of representation. However, rather than portraying idealised characters fashioned for the stage, Marston shows us ones who are, if anything, more realistic than those usually presented in drama. Andrugio is shown to be an individual who struggles to apply a set of philosophical beliefs to the practical circumstances in which he finds himself; the problem is so familiar and mundane that it is not commonly dramatised. We are shown the aspects of Andrugio's character that are usually omitted from dramatic portrayals, perhaps on the grounds of their being incompatible with the medium of expression, but nevertheless, our

temptation to see this as satirical is an indication of our dependence on convention as a guide to interpretation.

Contrasting with the depiction of Andrugio and its focus on his thoughts, emotions and beliefs, Piero appears to have no interior life at all. He is presented as a stock tyrant who will "be proud, stroke up the hair and strut" (*AM* Ind., 14), whose court is peopled with a collection of parasites, flatterers and fools. The opening act shows him to be inordinately proud, responding to Feliche's warnings with a quotation from Seneca's *Thyestes* translated as, "I release the gods, for the utmost of my prayers have I attained" (*AM* I.i.60n.), and accepting the flattery of Forobosco with "*O me!*" *coelitum excelsissimum* (*AM* I.i.78. Tr. "Oh, most exalted of the gods am I"). The first act is replete with displays of Piero's ostentatious pomp as he formally greets Galeatzo and Matzagente, and his departure from the stage is marked with a flourish of cornets and a peal of shot (*AM* I.i.140.1).

Piero's reaction to his discovery of Antonio's note (*AM* III.ii.167-187) reduces him to an object of ridicule: he lapses into incoherence, giving contradictory orders and degenerating into meaningless stutters. Mellida's escape from his court disguised as a page who dances in front of her unwitting father reinforces the comic aspect of the action. When Piero is told that she has run away, he issues palindromic instructions to "Fly, call, run, row, ride, cry, shout, hurry, haste, / Haste, hurry, shout, cry, ride, row, run, call, fly", calling attention to his linguistic joke by adding "Backward and forward" (*AM* III.ii.271-73). His foolishness undermines any impression previously created that he represents a threat to Andrugio or the lovers: his declared intention to

destroy Andrugio and Antonio seems as fatuous as his hubris and his passion for display.

But Piero is neither fatuous nor shallow: in spite of his bombastic appearance, he finally displays not inconsiderable ability as a strategist, as does Andrugio. This becomes evident in the final act, in which the reunion of Antonio and Mellida takes place amid the confusion of Andrugio's and Piero's attempts to outmanoeuvre one another. Earlier in the play, Andrugio, responding to Antonio's grief when Piero recaptures Mellida, demands that Lucio give him his armour, saying, "Come, let me die like old Andrugio, / Worthy my birth. O, blood-true-honoured graves / Are far more blessèd than base life of slaves" (*AM* IV.ii.35-37). It is at this point that he achieves the sought-after harmony of belief and action, deciding to follow the Stoic option described by Seneca: "If you do not wish to fight you may escape. Of all the things which I deemed necessary for you, I have made none easier than dying" (45). Andrugio chooses nothing so simple as falling on his sword, however; his subsequent actions suggest that he has given quite some thought to Lucio's earlier suggestion that he "sojourn . . . / Till time and fortune give revenge firm means" (*AM* III.i.94-5), and also that his Stoicism is of the Christian variety, there being no Christian injunction against martyrdom, although suicide is forbidden.

Andrugio ensures that his arrival at Piero's court is as public as possible, announced by both a flourish (*AM* V.ii.138.1) and a sennet (*AM* V.ii.145.1). He makes his intention clear to the assembled court as he addresses Piero:

> Then, here, Piero, is Andrugio's head,
> Royally casquèd in a helm of steel.
> Give me thy love, and take it. . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . Strike!
> O, let no glimpse of honour light thy thoughts.
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . Piero, I am come
> To soil thy house with an eternal blot
> Of savage cruelty. Strike, or bid me strike!
> I pray my death, that thy ne'er-dying shame
> Might live immortal to posterity.
> Come, be a princely hangman; stop my breath.
> O, dread thou shame no more than I dread death. (*AM* V.ii.160-62; 167-68; 173-79).

That Andrugio's intention is to force Piero into the shameful act of killing him, thereby disgracing himself for eternity is evident, not only in this speech, but also after Piero spares his life. When Lucio enters carrying the coffin in which the body of Antonio is lying, Andrugio says, "Why, I am glad he's dead. He shall not see / His father's *vanquished by his enemy*, / Even in princely honour" (*AM* V.ii.194-96. Emphasis added). These are not the words of a man who has thrown himself on the mercy of his enemy and been saved: they are those of one whose anticipated satisfaction at the prospect of destroying his enemy's

honour through his death has been thwarted by superior tactics. Piero, for all his apparent ineptitude, is not fool enough to fall for Andrugio's ploy. He responds to the challenge in a manner calculated to deprive Andrugio of the satisfaction he seeks, saying:

> We are amazed, our rough spirits numbed
> In stiff astonished wonder at thy prowess,
> Most mighty, valiant, and high-tow'ring heart.
> We blush and turn our hate upon ourselves
> For hating such an unpeered excellence.
> I joy my state, him whom I loathed before
> That now I honour, love, nay more, adore. (*AM* V.ii.180-186)

Piero's success in outwitting his opponent is short-lived, however. The arrival of Antonio, seemingly dead, catches him unprepared: having redeemed his honour at Andrugio's expense, but being obliged to continue his pretence of having been won over to admiration and affection towards Andrugio on account of the latter's courage, Piero's effusions concerning the apparently dead Antonio commit him to having to respond favourably once Antonio turns out to be alive. In this respect, Antonio shows that his behaviour thus far has belied his cunning. Not until Piero has fully and publicly committed himself to Antonio's life does he rise from the coffin: Piero's first statement, "O, that my tears, bedewing thy wan cheek, / Could make new spirit sprout in thy cold blood!" (*AM* V.ii.213-14) is not sufficient. Antonio does not respond until

Piero reiterates, "O, that my life, her love, my dearest blood / Would but redeem one minute of his breath!" (*AM* V.ii.221-22). Antonio's first words on rising from the coffin are, "I seize that breath" (*AM* V.ii.223), adding, "Piero, keep thy vow" (*AM* V.ii.225). Since Piero has already demonstrated that he values his reputation above Andrugio's head, he is now forced to accept Antonio or lose all respect.

The ending of the play is exceptionally complex, squeezing two reversals into the final 135 lines to provide what can technically be described as a comic ending. I use the word "technically" because the rapidity with which the resolution is achieved creates two conflicting impressions, both of which subvert the credibility of the ending. The plot resolution, if we trust it, makes the characterisation radically inconsistent, because at precisely the same time as the plot is resolved, the seriousness of the conflict between Piero, Andrugio and Antonio is fully revealed. If we give credence to this seriousness, then it is impossible to trust the plot resolution, which in turn calls into question the play's generic status as a comedy.

If the play is treated seriously, and it is accepted that the transgressions of convention I have pointed out are deliberate and not the result of the playwright's ineptitude, *Antonio and Mellida* can be seen to raise important issues concerning drama as a whole. It highlights the extent to which convention governs our judgement of what constitutes a realistic representation of events by manipulating those conventions in such a way as to render them unreliable, and it calls our reliance on generic definition into question by being generically indeterminate. Finally, by showing the way in which some experiences, such as

extreme passion, cannot be effectively dramatised, and by overstepping the limits usually applied to drama, it makes both the limits and the limitations of drama explicit.

Notes.

[1]. All references to *Antonio and Mellida* are to the Revels Plays edition, ed. W. Reavley Gair (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1991) unless otherwise stated. In the interests of consistency, I have adopted the traditional name spellings of Feliche, Galeatzo, Matzagente and Catzo, which Gair alters in this edition. In his 1978 edition of *Antonio's Revenge*, which I also use, the names are spelt as I spell them here.

To avoid confusion that may arise in my discussion of the Antonio plays, all references to *Antonio and Mellida* and *Antonio's Revenge* are prefaced by *AM* and *AR* respectively.

INTERFACE

In his essay, "Not-Knowing", Donald Barthelme writes:

> Let us suppose that I am the toughest banjulele player in town and that I have contracted to play "Melancholy Baby" for six hours before an audience that will include the four next-toughest banjulele players in town. . . . There is one thing of which you may be sure: I am not going to play "Melancholy Baby" as written. Rather I will play something that is parallel, in some sense, to "Melancholy Baby," based upon the chords of "Melancholy Baby," made out of "Melancholy Baby," *having to do with* "Melancholy Baby" -- commentary, exegesis, elaboration, contradiction. The interest of my construction, if any, is to be located in the space between the new entity I have constructed and the "real" "Melancholy Baby," which remains in the mind as the horizon which bounds my efforts. (22. His emphases)

Barthelme's description of his banjulele improvisations is in many ways analogous to Marston's *Antonio* plays. John Scott Colley writes, "If Bernard Beckerman is correct in saying that the Elizabethan play generally reaches an emotional peak in the middle of the third act, surely Marston's achievement illustrates an inverse example of this phenomenon", arguing that "in the third

act of *Antonio and Mellida* . . . any possibility of drama is destroyed" (63). Applied, what Barthelme's passage suggests is that the emotional peak of the play exists outside the performance itself, locating itself between the actual events and their enactment, between the "real" *Antonio and Mellida* and the version Marston produces. This is a difficult concept, because it presupposes a "real" version underlying the play we have, to which this one refers. In this respect, the reflexivity of *Antonio and Mellida*, the existence of its sequel, Antonio's Revenge, and the deceptive characterisation and plotting aid explanation.

Antonio and Mellida begins with an induction that, on first examination, seems similar to that of *What You Will*: the actors discuss the play they are about to perform. The two inductions differ in one important aspect, however. The characters who introduce *What You Will* are unrecognisable once the play proper begins, whereas in *Antonio and Mellida* they retain the identities in which they appear in the induction, thus creating the impression that the actors are in fact representing themselves. The effect of this is to suggest that there is an underlying reality, and that the discussion in the induction enacts the actors' concern with how best to facilitate the audience's recognition of the types of people they are, utilising well-known character stereotypes. In this manner, the illusion of "real" characters is created, against which their performance of themselves functions as "commentary, exegesis, elaboration, contradiction". As has been noted, the characters seem in some respects unfinished, still in the process of fashioning themselves, showing evidence of behaviour and attitudes

that are not normally dramatised; precisely what can be expected of people attempting to impersonate themselves.

Their self-fashioning thus operates on two levels. On one level, for example, Andrugio aspires to be a true Stoic, while on the other he attempts to represent this dramatically. To appropriate Barthelme's description, the "interest . . . is to be located in the space between the new entity [Andrugio has] constructed and the 'real' [Andrugio]", the space being those aspects of Andrugio's character that are not overtly presented. So, for example, we are not shown the way in which Andrugio plots his revenge on Piero; this becomes apparent only in retrospect when we are confronted with the baffling conclusion to the play, and our search for a satisfactory explanation reveals the clues to what really happens.

Antonio is a similar case. His dramatic representation of himself is based on his "true person being Antonio, son to the Duke of Genoa, though for the love of Piero's daughter, [he] take[s] this feigned presence of an Amazon" (Ind.71-3), as well the problem of having to disguise himself as a woman, and then revert to manhood. The dilemma is not ontological; it is one of representation, and it is solved in his portrayal of himself as a somewhat effete, stereotypical young lover. Again, what is most important is what lies between the real Antonio and his presentation of himself, a space that exposes the limitations of dramatic representation. Antonio's self-enactment emphasises the way in which characters in plays are necessarily caricatures, since the scope of a performance is too limited to allow for a multi-faceted depiction of character. While Antonio's focus on his status as passionate lover is exaggerated

to the extent that it suggests a parody, it nevertheless shows how his more subtle qualities are subsumed by the demands of the stage. As with Andrugio, these qualities have to be extrapolated from their results.

Piero's representation, because of his actions at the end of the play, engenders more bewilderment than do the enactments of Antonio and Andrugio. W. Reavley Gair's comment is representative: "When Piero returns to the stage, his character has undergone a startling shift of emphasis. He is no longer the ruthless, tyrannical *condottiere* but has mellowed into a kindly uncle concerned with his niece's marriage prospects" (Intro. 37). At the start of the final scene, to which this remark refers, Piero can well afford to appear avuncular: he has succeeded in recapturing Mellida, and plans to marry her off to Galeatzo the following day, thus thwarting Antonio's love for her. That the way in which Piero presents his own character is extremely misleading, to other characters and audience alike, becomes apparent in the first scene of *Antonio's Revenge*, in which we learn that, in the temporal space between the two plays, Piero has murdered Andrugio. In the final scene of *Antonio and Mellida*, Piero presents both his "real" self and his dramatised character, and the problem is to discern which is which. Antonio, like most commentators, misunderstands Piero, interpreting the latter's "O, that my life, her love, my dearest blood / Would but redeem one minute of his breath!" as a vow (V.ii.221-22). In fact, Piero makes only one vow in this scene:

ANDRUGIO. *[Reading Piero's proclamation] "We vow, by the honour of our birth, to recompense any man that bringeth Andrugio's head with twenty thousand double pistolets and the endearing to our choicest love."*

PIERO. We still with most unmoved resolve confirm
Our large munificence, and here breathe
A sad and solemn protestation:
When I recall this vow, O, let our house
Be even commanded, stained, trampled on,
As worthless rubbish of nobility. (AM V.ii.154-59)

The indeterminacy of the ending of *Antonio and Mellida* is clarified by the opening of *Antonio's Revenge*, when it is revealed that Piero has adhered to his only vow, and murdered Andrugio. The significant action occurs in the space between the reality of Piero's intention to destroy Andrugio and the dramatic presentation of their reconciliation: the "health" Andrugio drinks is Piero's murder instrument.

Another limitation of drama that becomes apparent through applying Barthelme's model concerns the narrative and how it is transformed into plot. While conventions such as soliloquies and asides allow characters to reveal thoughts, secret plans and otherwise concealed aspects of their personalities, this precludes the possibility of presenting a sequence of events as it is experienced in real life. In *Antonio and Mellida*, the audience is not accorded any privileged insight into the workings of the plot, or the plans and motivations of the various characters. Again, these are things that exist in the space between

what happens and what we see. While this preserves the element of surprise, it is sufficiently unconventional to engender a good deal of confusion, giving rise to such comments as John Scott Colley's: "the play . . . end[s] on a note of farce and ribaldry" (69), or that of W. Reavley Gair:

> The concluding actions of the play are full of the implausibilities of literary romance . . . . Andrugio presents himself to claim the reward for his own head; Antonio appears once again as a dead man, but soon "arises"; Piero's extravagant hatred is turned to equally extreme affection . . . by Andrugio's bravery . . . . The conclusion of the action . . . suggests that the scene has become one where Piero is now being presented as an exemplary Renaissance prince, presiding over a court that could suitably be called "the flower of the world" (*AM* Intro., 37)

These statements show a lack of recognition of the serious nature of the events depicted in the final scene, most likely as a result of the problem I have already described relating to the conflict between the plot resolution and the characterisation at the end of the play.

That in *Antonio and Mellida* characters impersonate themselves is borne out by the reflexivity of the play. A striking instance of this is when Andrugio, bewailing his lot, enacts his misery:

> when a soul is splitted, sunk with grief,
> He might fall thus [*He casts himself down*] upon the breast of earth
> And in her ear halloo his misery,
> Exclaiming thus: 'O thou all-bearing earth,
> Which men do gape for till thou cramm'st their mouths
> And chok'st their throats with dust, O, chawn thy breast
> And let me sink into thee! [*He beats the ground*]
> Look who knocks; Andrugio calls!' (AM III.i.39-46)

Andrugio's use of the modal auxiliary verb "might" draws attention to his enactment of what he would be able to do if the earth were not "deaf and blind" (*AM* III.i.46); because it is, he cannot do what he acts out for Lucio. Thus Andrugio demonstrates the impossibility of an action by enacting it, drawing our attention to his role as an actor.

Antonio displays an awareness of his own behaviour that suggests that he consciously represents himself. He addresses his page:

> Breathe me a point that may enforce me weep,
> To wring my hands, to break my cursèd breast,
> Rave and exclaim, lie groveling on the earth,
> Straight start up frantic, crying, 'Mellida!'
> Sing but 'Antonio hath lost Mellida',
> And thou shalt see me, like a man possessed,
> Howl out such passion . . . (*AM* IV.i.143-49)

It is as though he is refreshing his memory, preparing himself for the portrayal of grief that must be performed properly in order to be convincing. His closing comment, "When I am in, / 'Tis harder for me end than to begin" (*AM* IV.i.153-54) reinforces this impression, recalling the doubts about his performance that he expresses during the induction, and suggesting that he has a tendency to lose control of his performance. This is borne out by the overtly histrionic nature of many of his actions.

At times characters make remarks that appear to be directly addressed to the audience. Feliche comments on the spectacle of Balurdo and Rosaline entering, both intent on looking at themselves in mirrors held by Dildo and Flavia: "O, for time and place long enough and large enough to act these fools! Here might be made a rare scene of folly, if the plot could bear it" (*AM* III.ii.119-121). Alberto, abandoning his quest for Rosaline's affection, announces, "Here ends my part in this love's comedy", and leaves the stage, not to reappear (*AM* V.i.69). These and other reflexive remarks punctuate the play,

ensuring that the audience remains conscious of the performance as a re-presentation, enacted by characters portraying themselves.

In some respects, *Antonio and Mellida* and *Antonio's Revenge* seem to have little in common beyond their identical setting and their use of the same characters. Each play is capable of sustaining independent performance and examination; neither requires the other in order to achieve coherence. Taken individually, the two plays address widely differing issues: Antonio and Mellida "the comic crosses of true love" (*AM*, V.ii.279), and Antonio's Revenge the "sullen tragic scene" (*AR* Prologue, 7) of a revenge play. The differences between the plays can be seen in the critical response to each. *Antonio and Mellida* consistently eludes generic definition and flouts accepted conventions relating to our expectations regarding dramatic representation, while *Antonio's Revenge* can safely be described as belonging to what A. H. Thorndike calls

> a distinct species of the tragedy of blood[,] . . . a tragedy whose leading motive is revenge and whose main action deals with the progress of this revenge, leading to the death of the murderers and often the death of the revenger himself. (In Gair, *AR* Introduction, 22)

The most significant deviation from this generic form in *Antonio's Revenge* is its ending, in which, instead of the avenger dying or being punished, he is hailed as "another Hercules to us / In ridding huge pollution from our state" (*AR* V.vi.12-13).

Despite these differences, however, the common ground the two plays share encourages an examination of them as a single unit. What emerges when they are seen this way is a shift in balance, with a decrease in the importance of the love plot in Antonio and Mellida, and a concomitant increase in the significance of Andrugio's dispute with Piero, which culminates in the events of the second play. This shift reveals the exploratory nature of the plays, showing their function as an examination of the efficacy of philosophical and religious methods of correction.

It is this inquiry that runs through not only the Antonio plays, but *The Malcontent* as well, encouraging an approach to them based on the model of *praemeditatio futuri mali.* Considered as heuristic devices, the *Antonio* plays and *The Malcontent* can be regarded as exploring the corrective possibilities offered by, respectively, Christian Stoicism and the manipulation of identity in the face of tyrannical evil.

Taking *Antonio and Mellida* and *Antonio's Revenge* in sequence, the way in which they can be treated as an example of *praemeditatio futuri mali* becomes apparent. In *Antonio and Mellida* the story of the beleaguered lovers functions as a framework within which the intensification of Piero's treachery and villainy can be traced. This enables various characters to attempt to apply mild correctives. As each fails, Piero gains confidence in the ineffectuality of others to restrain his aggression. At the same time, his direct agency in his misdeeds increases: at the beginning of the play, while he swears to "prosecute [his] family's revenge / . . . with such a burning chase / Till [he] ha[s] dried up all Andrugio's blood" (*AM*, I.i.88-90), he pursues his aim by means of a

proclamation promising a reward to "whosoever brings Andrugio's head, / Or young Antonio's" (*AM*, I.i.69-70). It is not until he gives Andrugio the poisoned "toast" in the final scene that Piero acts directly and physically against his enemies.

Paraphrasing Seneca's *De Ira*, Geoffrey D. Aggeler describes the Stoic attitude to the correction of wrongdoers. The person attempting to change the unacceptable behaviour of another "should, like a competent physician treating an illness, employ mild remedies before he resorts to drastic measures. That is to say, he must first attempt to correct a malefactor by rebukes; if these fail, then he is justified in employing corporal punishment" (510). Feliche's approach to Piero corresponds to the initial step posited by the Stoics: he warns Piero of the dangers of hubris, which Piero dismisses with a characteristic "Pish! *Dimitto superos, summa votorum attigi*" (tr. "I release the gods, for the utmost of my prayers have I attained". *AM* I.i.60 and n.). This failure to affect Piero's behaviour is predictable: at this early stage the extent to which Piero is prepared to pursue his hatred of Andrugio and Antonio is unclear.

The characterisation of Piero creates an image of ineptitude easily associated with the image of the stage tyrant described by Alberto in the induction:

> thus frame your exterior shape
> To haughty form of elate majesty,
> As if you held the palsy-shaking head

> Of reeling Chance under your fortune's belt,
> In strictest vassalage. Grow big in thought
> As swoll'n with glory of successful arms. (*AM*, Induction, 7-12)

The depiction of his court reinforces this image: surrounded by the likes of the fool Balurdo, the parasite Forobosco, the braggart Matzagente, and his foul-mouthed niece Rosaline, Piero thrives on obsequiousness and "the public power [that] makes [his] faction strong" (*AM* I.i.84). His rule seems to be based on little more than "the unsavoury breath of multitudes, / Shouting and clapping with confusèd din", which, Andrugio points out, is not what "makes a prince" (*AM* IV.i.50-52). To all outward appearances, Feliche's failure to make any impression on this self-aggrandizing petty tyrant is of little concern, because Piero seems so inept. The problem is that Piero's self-presentation turns out to be profoundly deceptive.

Feliche's scolding proving ineffective, Andrugio's challenge is a more strenuous attempt to restrain Piero, yet the comic action in the last act of *Antonio and Mellida* tends to subvert the seriousness of his undertaking. Andrugio's "here, Piero, is Andrugio's head" (*AM*, V.ii.160) engenders apprehension on his behalf less readily than it recalls Balurdo's earlier comment when Piero threatens to set up Antonio's head somewhere: "Up? -- on his shoulders, that's the fittest place for it" (*AM*, III.ii.251). However, if Andrugio's suicidal mission were to succeed, Piero's loss of honour would effectively put an end to his villainy, since his power is dependent on public support.

Piero's success in covertly murdering Andrugio allows him to become more open in his iniquity, and the attempts to stop him must consequently increase in vigour. *Antonio's Revenge* presents the next stage in the examination of what type of sanction will prove sufficient to curb Piero's abuse of power.

At the same time, the impression that the players are consciously representing themselves collapses: in the interval between the close of Antonio and Mellida and the opening of *Antonio's Revenge,* the "real" Piero emerges, and the ensuing action lacks the self-consciousness that is so characteristic of the first play. In this respect it is as though, without the players being aware of it, the reality of what they are performing overtakes their consciousness of their performance. Or, to return to Barthelme and his banjulele, the "real" "Melancholy Baby" reasserts itself without the musician being consciously aware of it.

CHAPTER 3

Much of the first scene of *Antonio's Revenge* is devoted to the clarification of Piero's role. Here, the closing scene of Antonio and Mellida is reiterated from Piero's point of view, as he explains his actions. He confirms that under the circumstances of Andrugio's challenge, he had no option but to spare the latter's life:

> Huge infamy
> Press down my honour if even then, when
> His fresh act of prowess bloomed out full,
> I had ta'en vengeance on his hated head. (*AR* I.i.52-55)

Ironically, although this appeared, at the time, to have worked in Andrugio's favour, Piero's apparent abrogation of his vow to kill his enemy effectively neutralised the latter's aim to deprive Piero of his honour by forcing him to make good his threat. In the first scene of *Antonio's Revenge*, Antonio's ostensible victory over Piero is shown to be hollow, and Piero's affirmations of affection towards him at the end of *Antonio and Mellida* to be dissembling. As Piero says, "Could I avoid to give a seeming grant / Unto fruition of Antonio's love?" (*AR* I.i.57-58). In the context of the first scene of *Antonio's Revenge*, the comic ending of *Antonio and Mellida* emerges as an unqualified victory for Piero,

demonstrating his calibre as a treacherous enemy capable of dealing effectively with the unexpected. As it transpires, he makes the same error of judgement with regard to Antonio as the latter made of him in the final scene of *Antonio and Mellida*: Piero underestimates Antonio, mistakenly believing that, having "Poison[ed] the father", he will be able, with as much ease, to "butcher the son, and marry the mother" (*AR* I.i.104). In the interim, he applauds his own success, celebrating the efficacy of his hypocrisy in securing Andrugio's death:

> Say, faith, didst thou e'er hear, or read, or see
> Such happy vengeance, unsuspected death?
> That I should drop strong poison in the bowl
> Which I myself caroused unto his health
> And future fortune of our unity;
> That it should work even in the hush of night,
> And strangle him on sudden, that fair show
> Of death for the excessive joy of his fate
> Might choke the murder! (*AR* I.i.66-74)

The function of this scene is to effect a tonal shift from the indeterminacy and apparent lightness of *Antonio and Mellida* to the progressively increasing horror of *Antonio's Revenge*. Piero no longer diverts attention from his villainy with verbal absurdities: the end of his vengeful engagement with Andrugio marks a change in the tenor of the hostilities.

Piero's poisoning of Andrugio signals an increase in his confidence. As has been noted, Andrugio's challenge constituted a stronger rebuke than Feliche's warnings, but there was no threat of violence against Piero at that stage, and he was able to sidestep the issue by prevaricating. The beginning of *Antonio's Revenge* confirms that his decision to spare Andrugio was simply a method of temporising to avoid incurring public opprobrium. As the restraints recommended by Christian Stoicism are progressively applied to Piero, they prove to be ineffectual as a means of controlling his vengeful ambitions. Instead, with Piero's growing realisation that others are powerless to hinder him, his concern with the consequences of public discovery of his misdeeds wanes.

This increasing disregard for popular knowledge or sanction of his actions can be seen both within the play itself and in its staging for an audience. In *Antonio and Mellida*, although Piero threatens violence, he is never seen to commit a violent act. Moreover, he neither confides in others nor speaks in soliloquy, so the audience has no knowledge of his interiority. By contrast, *Antonio's Revenge* opens with Piero instructing his new-found confidante Strotzo to "bind Feliche's trunk / Unto the panting side of Mellida" (*AR* I.i.1-2), following Strotzo's exit with a soliloquy in which he tells the audience of the "topless mount / Of unpeered mischief" he has performed (*AR* I.i.9-10). His soliloquy complements his blood-besmeared physical appearance: not only do we have physical evidence of Piero's villainy for the first time, but gleeful verbal confirmation of it.

The next character to challenge Piero is Feliche's father, Pandulpho, after his son's open criticism of the tyrant has resulted in Feliche's murder. Piero explains: "Feliche [has been] stabbed / (whose sinking thought frightèd my conscious heart) / And laid by Mellida, to stop the match [with Antonio]" (*AR* I.i.75-77). Pandulpho's progression from Stoic acceptance of his son's murder to joining forces with Antonio in exacting revenge on Piero is marked by his growing distrust of the latter. His laughter at his son's murder can be seen as both an involuntary expression of shock and an adherence to Stoic principles. In his essay "On Tranquillity", Seneca writes:

> the man who does not restrain laughter shows a nobler spirit than the man who does not restrain tears, for laughter involves slight emotional commitment and indicates that nothing in the appurtenances of life is important or serious or even pitiful. (102)

Pandulpho's desire to bury his son contradicts the impression that he lacks emotional commitment, as does had been / A gracious son" (*AR* II.ii.1-3). His exchange with Piero when he requests that the latter allow him to bury Feliche's body is complex and revealing. Although Pandulpho still speaks as a Stoic, he shows signs of strain that subtly foreshadow his eventual rejection of that philosophy. A comparison between his explanation of his laughter in response to the death of his son and his later conversation with Piero illustrates his shift in attitude. He reasons with Alberto:

> If he is guiltless, why should tears be spent?
> Thrice blessèd soul that dieth innocent.
> If he is lepered with so foul a guilt,
> Why should a sigh be lent, a tear be spilt? (*AR* I.v.81-84)

By contrast, when he speaks to Piero, Pandulpho shows evidence of both grief and of a mounting distrust of Piero's explanation for his having killed Feliche:

> Methinks I hear a humming murmur creep
> From out his gellied wounds. Look on those lips,
> Those now lawn pillows, on whose tender softness
> Chaste modest speech, stealing from out his breast,
> Had wont to rest itself, as loath to post
> From out so fair an inn; look, look, they seem to stir
> And breathe defiance to black obloquy. (AR II.ii.10-16)

The implication of Pandulpho's final line is not lost on Piero, who immediately asks, "Think'st thou thy son could suffer wrongfully?" (*AR* II.ii.17). In the ensuing exchange, Piero not only reveals his discomfort in the presence of "a virtuous man", rhetorically asking himself in an aside, "what has our court to do / With virtue, in the devil's name!" (*AR* II.ii.27-28), but he also discloses his intention to falsely accuse Antonio of having murdered Andrugio. In the mistaken belief that he will be able to corrupt Pandulpho, he asks him if he will

"join / In an oath with me against the traitor's life, / And swear you knew he sought his father's death" (*AR* II.ii.45-47).

Pandulpho's steadfast refusal to embroil himself in Piero's plans is the first instance in which opposition affects Piero. He is clearly flustered, and his language reveals this: when Pandulpho insists that he will not obey Piero's commands unless they concern "just and honourable things", the latter retorts that, in that case, he himself "then will traduce his guilt" (*AR* II.ii.53, 54). Piero thus openly states that he means to "defame, malign, vilify, slander, calumniate, misrepresent" Antonio (*OED* traduce v. 3). As the dialogue continues, Piero becomes increasingly careless in his speech, finally threatening Pandulpho, but to no avail. Piero's resultant discomfort at his failure to either corrupt or frighten Pandulpho is evident in his acknowledgement that "His quiet's firmer than I can disease" (*AR* II.ii.103). Yet though Piero is obviously unsettled during his encounter with Pandulpho, the example of unassailable virtue and moral courage does nothing to alter his behaviour. On the contrary, he subsequently stages his first public murder, strangling his collaborator, Strotzo, in full view of the entire court.

The irony of Piero's statements that "Pollution must be purged" (*AR* II.ii.3) and "You know how godlike 'tis to root out sin" (*AR* II.ii.44), is immediate in the sense that it is apparent that he personally represents both pollution and sin, and proleptic inasmuch as he is addressing these remarks to one of the agents of purgation. The closing scene reiterates this view: the second senator's laudatory "Blest be you all, and may your honours live / Religiously held sacred, even for ever and ever" (*AR* V.vi.10-11) emphasises the

godlike qualities attributed to those who have, in Galeatzo's words, "[rid] huge pollution from our state" (*AR* V.vi.13). This in turn raises the question which is not only central to the play, but which remains unanswered in the late twentieth century: when all morally sanctioned means fail to control unmitigated evil, what possible courses of action remain? The Antonio plays explore one possibility, but it is not offered as a simple solution.

Pandulpho and Piero are presented in direct contrast with one another, the Stoicism of the former being set against the unrestrained autocracy of the latter, as their differing attitudes towards reason illustrates. Whereas Pandulpho holds that "he may of valour vaunt / . . . / Whom . . . stern fortune's siege / Makes not his reason slink" (*AR* I.v.93-96), Piero renounces it:

> There glow no sparks of reason in the world,
> All are raked up in ashy beastliness;
> The bulk of man's as dark as Erebus,
> No branch of reason's light hangs in his trunk'
> There lives no reason to keep league withal,
> I ha' no reason to be reasonable. (*AR* I.iv.23-28)

Pandulpho consistently iterates Stoic principles, and in the main succeeds in living by them, appearing unmoved when Piero banishes him, and employing what Braden refers to as "The essential Stoic strategy for dealing with a tyrant[, which] is not interference but indifference" (17). Stoic indifference, however, is no match against one who commits "sins whose filth excels / The blackest

customs of blind infidels" (*AR* I.v.91-92), and Pandulpho's attempt to retain his beliefs in the face of Piero's excesses finally disintegrates when his repetition of Stoic maxims fails to bring him any solace for the loss of his son. He realises that "Man will break out, despite philosophy" (*AR* IV.v.46), and that there are circumstances in which the only option available is "to stab in fume of blood" (*AR* I.v.89).

Pandulpho's assertion that "all this while I ha' but played a part, / Like to some boy that acts a tragedy, / Speaks burly words and raves out passion" (*AR* IV.v.47-49) draws attention to the reflexivity of this play, and illustrates the way in which it differs from that of *Antonio and Mellida.* Recalling the model of *praemeditatio futuri mali*, the self-consciousness of the actors in the first play suggests an attempt to enact a realistic portrayal of imagined events. *Antonio's Revenge*, on the other hand, resembles the successful actualisation of the experiment. This can be seen by comparing the attitudes characters express towards acting in the two plays. Whereas in *Antonio and Mellida*, many of the comments reveal a concern as to how an individual might act in given circumstances, those of Pandulpho and Antonio in *Antonio's Revenge* point to a rejection of acting. Pandulpho's speech quoted above registers his realisation that a rigid adherence to dogma fails to address certain contingencies. Antonio's refusal to "swell like a tragedian / In forcèd passion of affected strains" (*AR* II.iii.104-05) is in marked contrast to his fervent outpourings in *Antonio and Mellida.* His declaration that he will "force [his] face / To palliate [his] sickness" (*AR* II.iii.114-15) and his subsequent disguise as a fool are measures of necessity rather than problems of representation.

The speech by the ghost of Andrugio that opens the fifth act clearly does not fit this pattern. Rather, it serves to emphasise the immateriality and consequent lack of agency of the ghost, casting it in the role of chorus. The ghost presents his observations as commentary:

> Now down looks providence
> T'attend the last act of my son's revenge.
> Be gracious, Observation, to our scene;
> For now the plot unites his scattered limbs
> Close in contracted bands. (*AR* V.i.10-14)

The invocation to "Observation" serves as a reminder of the ghost's incorporeality and, consequently, his inability to do any more than urge Antonio to seek revenge and observe the ensuing action. In this sense, the ghost stands outside the performance, unable to exert any direct influence on the course of events. Whereas Antonio rejects acting and Pandulpho relinquishes it, the ghost of Andrugio is powerless to act in any sense of the word.

The gap between reality and representation evident in *Antonio and Mellida* collapses in its sequel, as Balurdo discovers at the hands of Piero. The fool is the only character who retains the illusion that he is acting in a play, responding to Piero's summons by arriving "with a beard half off, half on" (*AR* II.i.20.1), and complaining that "the tiring man hath not glued on my beard half fast enough" (*AR* II.i.30-31). His innocent interjections during Piero's altercation with Alberto over Pandulpho's grievances earn him a punishment that cruelly

disabuses him of his misconception, for in response to Balurdo's insistence that "the man hath wrong", Piero commands Castilio to "Clap him into the palace dungeon; / Lap him in rags and let him feed on slime / That smears the dungeon cheek" (AR IV.iii. 145; 146-49). The play presents a distressing spectacle of the capacity of tyranny to infect even the most harmless individuals when this "Poor honest soul" (AR V.iii.47) is driven by his experience of cold, hunger and filth to join forces with the revengers.

The pollutant nature of Piero's evil is nowhere more evident than in the depiction of Antonio, the play clearly showing that while revenge does get rid of the villain, it also corrupts the retributive agent. T. F. Wharton's complaint that "*Antonio's Revenge* does not parody revenge ethics, but endorses vengeance in its most sadistic form" (363) identifies the similarities to Piero's language and imagery that appear in Antonio's speech, but fails to take account of the way in which these similarities are developed. Wharton assumes that parody is the only possible explanation for there being "a damaging affinity between the languages of ranting villain and 'heroic' revenger" (358) if we reject the proposition that Marston's "stylistic opportunism simply demonstrates his incapacity to handle plot and agent in any integrated design" (357).

A detailed examination of the play shows that Antonio's use of language and imagery develops similarities to Piero's as his commitment to revenge emerges. At the beginning of Antonio's Revenge his speech recalls the young lover from *Antonio and Mellida*, frequently overcome by emotion. When Antonio recounts his dream in which he is visited by the ghosts of Andrugio and Feliche, he says to his companions, "my trembling joints / (Iced quite over

with a frozed cold sweat) / Leaped forth the sheets" (I.iii.46-48), adding that, having prayed, he "slunk to bed" (I.iii.60). On being told of Andrugio's death, he mourns:

> What, whom, whither, which shall I first lament?
> A dead father, a dishonoured wife? Stand!
> Methinks I feel the frame of nature shake.
> Cracks not the joints of earth to bear my woes? (*AR* I.v.30-33)

This is clearly reminiscent of his opening lines in *Antonio and Mellida:*

> Heart, wilt not break? And thou, abhorrèd life,
> Wilt thou still breathe in my enrag,d blood?
> Veins, sinews, arteries, why crack ye not,
> Burst and divulsed with anguish of my grief? (AM, I.i.1-4)

It is in the third act that Antonio's language begins to show a marked change, taking on a noticeable resemblance to that of Piero. Antonio addresses the inhabitants of the graveyard as "Cold flesh, bleak trunks, wrapped in your half-rot shrouds" (*AR* III.i.10), recalling Piero's lines in the previous act: "Rot there, thou cerecloth that enfolds the flesh / Of my loathed foe" (*AR* II.i.1-2). Piero, having murdered Feliche, notes that "No spirit moves upon the breast of earth, / Save howling dogs, nightcrows, and screeching owls, / Save meagre ghosts,

Piero, and black thoughts" (*AR* I.i.6-8), while Antonio, having murdered Julio, comments:

> Now barks the wolf against the full-cheeked moon,
> Now lions' half-clammed entrails roar for food,
> Now croaks the toad and night-crows screech aloud,
> Fluttering 'bout casements of departing souls;
> Now gapes the graves, and through their yawns let loose
> Imprisoned spirits to revisit earth. (*AR* III.iii.43-48)

Both Antonio and Piero muse about the proportions of male and female in people, Piero asking of Pandulpho, "Is he all, all man, / Hath he no part of mother in him, ha?" (*AR* II.ii.34-35), and Antonio wishing, "O that I knew which joint, which side, which limb / Were father all, and had no mother in't" (III.iii.20-21). Both consider blood as steam or smoke, and refer to it in similar terms:

> PIERO: I have been nursed in blood, and still have sucked
> The steam of reeking gore. (*AR* II.i.19-20)

> ANTONIO: thy father's blood
> I thus make incense of: [*ANTONIO allows JULIO'S blood to fall upon the hearse*] to Vengeance!

> Ghost of my poisoned sire, suck this fume;
> To sweet revenge, perfume thy circling air
> With smoke of blood. (*AR* III.iii.61-65)

> ANTONIO: Look how I smoke in blood, reeking the steam
> Of foaming vengeance. (*AR* III.v.17-18)

Antonio's arrival at Maria's chamber, "*his arms bloody, [bearing] a torch and poniard*" (*AR* III.v.13.1) bears a striking resemblance to Piero at the start of the play, when he enters the stage, "*his arms bare, smeared in blood, a poniard in one hand, bloody, and a torch in the other*" (*AR* I.i.0.1-2). These similarities between Antonio and Piero are clearly not accidental: they are not present before act three. When Antonio murders Julio, thereby initiating his revenge, the appearance of these signs traces the manner in which his nature is degraded by his actions.

Charles and Elaine Hallett maintain that "the retribution plot fails to convince us that its heroes are worthy of the admiration it requires us to give them" (175), adding that Marston has an "ability to understand the *experience* of revenge but not its *implications*" (176. Their emphases). I would argue that it is precisely his understanding of the implications of revenge that engenders criticism of this nature. Rather than offering us the "comprehensive statement about the complex and fascinating interrelationships between natural justice, earthly justice and heavenly justice" the Hallets demand (176), Marston offers us a moral dilemma that resists "comprehensive statement[s]" of any kind. Once again, the problem seems to arise because of Marston's disregard for dramatic

convention, and his insistence on depicting the indeterminacy of real life. The retirement of the revengers to a monastery at the end of the play is at the root of much critical discontent. Michael Scott explains:

> The problem of the senators' judgement on the revengers' butchery in *Antonio's Revenge* . . . consists not merely in the fact that . . . Antonio fails to meet his own death and, rather, is praised by the Second Senator, but also in that Antonio and his companions suddenly confess their vows to accept a strictly Christian way of life. . . . That Antonio feels guilt is strange; that he has ever had the rational stability to make a vow is yet stranger; that he and Pandulpho have accepted traditional morality is strangest of all. (23-24)

What is truly strange is that commentators of the late twentieth century should have such trouble with the ending of *Antonio's Revenge*. To apply the problem to one of the more notorious villains in recent history, it is doubtful whether, had Klaus von Stauffenberg and his fellow-conspirators succeeded in assassinating Adolf Hitler on July 20, 1944 (Shirer, 1246-1253), there would have been a moral outcry and a demand that the instigator, "having exceeded the limitations of human prerogative, must pay for his presumption" (Hallett, 179). While I am not suggesting that Stauffenberg was motivated by a personal quest for vengeance, or that he became morally degenerate as a consequence of his plotting, the parallel that can be drawn is that like Hitler, Piero is considered to be evil, and the necessity of ridding society of that evil is of paramount

importance. In the case of Piero, as with that of Hitler, other means of restraining him have failed, leaving murder or assassination as the only practicable solution. What *Antonio's Revenge* suggests is that punishment of those who undertake the task of "ridding huge pollution from our state" (*AR* V.vi.13) is not necessarily appropriate.

A more difficult problem to deal with is that of Antonio's evident moral decline, and the enthusiasm with which he pursues his revenge. It is tempting to ascribe it to Marston's interest in Seneca, concluding that it is simply "a dramatization of a topos of literary Senecanism -- the idea of necessary excess in vengeance" (Robertson, 91). In his essay "Seneca and English Tragedy", however, G. K. Hunter describes the Senecan concept in which *furor*, the madness engendered by rage, overcomes reason, with the result that "the inner resource of the individual is empty and the infernal passions take its place" (185). In Seneca's plays, according to Hunter, those to whom this happens "are taken over by inhuman or anti-human emotions[,] they are released from human responsibility, [and] they become the vessels or instruments of the *furor*" (184). Hunter points out that the scene in which Antonio murders Julio, while it carries specific references to Seneca's *Thyestes*, is in fact "un-Senecan" in both its sentimentality and its representation of justice (187). A further argument against treating Antonio's behaviour as a case of possession by *furor* is that the "release from human responsibility" Hunter mentions would lessen the impact of the moral problem posed by the play. The effect of such an interpretation would be to undermine the importance of Antonio's agency in killing Piero, since it would lead to the conclusion that he has no choice in what

he does, thereby changing the play from one that presents a moral dilemma to one that presents the course of events depicted as inevitable.

In her essay "*Antonio's Revenge*: The Tyrant, the Stoic, and the Passionate Man", Karen Robertson suggests that, in view of the 1584 Bond of Association, which thousands of Englishmen joined, Antonio's apparently gratuitous murder of Julio "may have offered an intriguing investigation of the morally ambiguous actions to which [the signatories] or their acquaintances had subscribed" (93). According to Robertson, those who had signed the Bond of Association would meet any attempt to assassinate the queen with the pursuit and execution, not only of the assassin, but "the claimant to the throne, [and] also of that claimant's heir, even if that individual had not assented to the plot" (93). In view of Piero's having wrested Andrugio's dukedom of Genoa from him and subsequently murdered him, Robertson's argument is both stimulating and persuasive. But while this proposition offers a rational explanation for Antonio's murder of Julio, it does not account for the fact that it is the Venetian senators, and not the Genoese, who applaud Antonio's conduct. It also fails to address the effect of his actions on Antonio himself, and the barbaric excess of his method of killing Piero.

Charles and Elaine Hallet's observation that "The tyrant's crimes, however horrible, should not be made an excuse for another's inhumanity" (178) misses the point. The ending of *Antonio's Revenge* neither excuses nor sanctions the revengers' actions: it is the senators who glorify Antonio and his fellow-revengers, not the play. As with *Antonio and Mellida*, the ending of the play is of a complexity that engenders confusion. The care with which

Antonio's moral deterioration has been depicted stresses the insidious nature of his degradation: although he can "cleanse [his] hands" and "Purge [his] heart of hatred" (*AR* V.vi.37-38), he has been irreparably tainted by what he has done, as have the other revengers. This is evident in their competing claims of responsibility for the "gory spectacle" (*AR* V.vi.1) of Piero's mangled body when the rest of the court discover them. Antonio signals his awareness of the moral implications of having murdered Piero by saying, "We are amazed at your benignity" (*AR* V.vi.28), intimating that, regardless of the extenuation offered by Piero's turpitude, the offer of glory and riches in return for the revengers' having "[rid] huge pollution from our state" (*AR* V.vi.13) is inappropriate. Clearly, the revengers acknowledge that murder is a crime, irrespective of how justified it may be, and, as criminals, it is morally imperative that they are removed from society.

For the revengers to commit suicide in the face of the court's refusal to punish them for their crimes is an option they are obliged to reject, since it would contradict the legitimacy of their having disposed of Piero, himself a murderer against whom normal sanctions could not be applied. This highlights the moral predicament facing those who seek to remedy a situation such as that facing Antonio and his colleagues. In recognition of both the necessity of their deed as well its criminality, Pandulpho offers an acceptable solution:

since constraint

Of holy bands forceth us keep this lodge

> Of dirt's corruption till dread power calls
> Our souls' appearance, we will live enclosed
> In holy verge of some religious order. (*AR* V.vi.31-35)

The play presents us, not with the spectacle of immorality sanctioned, but with "the downcast ruins of calamity" (*AR* V.vi.53) that are the inevitable result of a problem that appears to be morally insoluble.

CHAPTER 4

Jacke Drum's Entertainment and *What You Will* stand outside the group of Marston's plays that examine responses to power, and in this respect cannot be treated as heuristics. They can, however, be regarded as variations on themes. To return to Barthelme's description of improvisation, the two comedies explore similar situations to those in the *Antonio* plays and *The Malcontent*, examining them in a different light. Thus, whereas Antonio and Mellida in the *Antonio* plays are faced with the difficulty in pursuing their love against the wishes of the tyrannical Piero, *Jacke Drum's Entertainment* focuses on a situation in which Katherine's father is utterly indifferent to the outcome of her love affair with Pasquil, while *What You Will* treats disguise in terms of its consequences for a character's sense of identity and *The Malcontent* examines its potential as a corrective of the abuse of power.

In its burlesque treatment of romantic comedy, *Jacke Drum's Entertainment* presents a wry commentary on the genre. The introductory speeches of the tyer-man and the child who follows him draw attention to the theatricality of what is to come, simultaneously challenging the concept of what constitutes a theatrical performance. In referring to the playwright, the actors and the stage, the tyer-man creates the impression that he is not in fact an actor, while the child, although he acknowledges that he is an actor, suggests that he is not acting. These two short performances, unlike the induction to *Antonio and Mellida*, bear no direct relation to the action that follows; they do suggest,

however, that the play requires an unconventional response. As the tyer-man and the child actor stand both inside and outside the drama, so the audience is forced into a liminal position in relation to the conventions of romantic comedy, participating in what Coleridge termed "the willing suspension of disbelief", and at the same time being continually reminded that the action and the characters participating in it are fictional. The reflexivity in *Jacke Drum's Entertainment* differs from that in *Antonio and Mellida* in this respect: whereas in the latter it functions primarily to draw attention to the characters as self-impersonators enacting their own experiences, in *Jacke Drum's Entertainment* it repeatedly emphasises the status of the play as drama.

The child actor claims that the play lacks a prologue (Introduction, 179). This is self-contradictory in more than one sense, a prologue being both "The preface or introduction to a discourse or performance . . . esp. a discourse or poem spoken as the introduction to a dramatic performance" and "One who speaks or recites the prologue to a play on the stage" (*OED*, prologue 1,2). We are thus confronted by a prologue delivering a prologue in which he announces that there is no prologue. Our understanding of the function and meaning of a prologue is challenged in a subversion of the convention upon which this understanding is based. Likewise, an examination of the minutiae in the play as a whole reveals the way in which burlesque and caricature are used to challenge our acceptance of the generic conventions of romantic comedy.

Anthony Caputi has remarked that the action in *Jacke Drum's Entertainment* is "nakedly conventional" (121). In terms of outcomes, the action does indeed follow conventional lines: the worthy, having endured a variety of misfortunes,

are finally rewarded, while those who deserve censure are duly punished, and the action is free of both moral conundrums and occurrences that raise serious concern. However, Caputi's remark fails to take into consideration the mode of characterisation and the nature of the intervening action, both of which draw attention to the latent absurdity of romantic comedy. The title of the play and the tyer-man's reference to it in the introduction (179) are retrospectively apt: Brewer defines "Jack (or John) Drum's Entertainment" as "Hauling a man by his ears and thrusting him out by the shoulders. The allusion is to 'drumming' a man out of the army" (686). Figuratively speaking, this is precisely the treatment accorded our expectations in this play.

The opening scene is unorthodox, with the combination of the bawdy *doubles entendres* of Timothy Tweedle, followed by Sir Edward Fortune's censuring the court and railing at Mamon's request for gossip, constituting a surprising opening for a comedy. The arrival of the morris dancers dispels Sir Edward's anger, however, and he subsequently reveals a number of admirable qualities. In response to Mamon's protests against his generosity he argues:

> Oh madnes still to sweate in hotte pursuite
> Of cold abhorred sluttish nigardise,
> To exile ones fortunes from their native use,
> To entertaine a present povertie,
> A willing want, for Infidell mistrust
> Of gracious providence. (I.183-84).

This speech gestures towards an attitude consonant with Seneca's exhortation, in "On Providence", to "avoid debilitating prosperity which makes men's minds soggy" (38). Not only does it suggest Stoicism, but it also places Sir Edward firmly within the Christian tradition, recalling the Sermon on the Mount, which incidentally reminds us with whom he is conversing:

> Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink: . . . . Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better then they? . . . . Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. (Matt. 6:24-34)

Mamon's suggestion that Sir Edward ought to pursue "respect and mounted place" (I.184) is similarly rejected with "Let who will climbe ambitious glibbery rowndes, / And leane upon the vulgars rotten love, / I'le not corivall him" (I.185). In his attitude towards his daughters, Sir Edward expresses equally commendable sentiments:

> Nay be free my daughters in election,
> Oh, how my soule abhorres inforced yokes,
> Chiefly in love, where affections bent

Should wholy sway the Fathers kind consent. (I.186)

While the qualities Sir Edward displays are unquestionably laudable, as the play progresses it becomes apparent that he is not, as John Peter claims, "obviously intended to represent a Marstonical ideal of generosity and wisdom" (228). On the contrary, Sir Edward exemplifies Christian Stoicism taken literally, with absurd results. Moses Hadas writes that the Stoic, "if he is to cultivate reason, must [not] allow emotions, . . . even love and grief for loved ones, to impinge on his soul. This is Stoic *apathy*, which means not listlessness but imperviousness to perturbations" (24), and Anthony Caputi points out that this *apathy* is "a humane indifference" (54), implying that it encompasses concern for the well-being of others. Sir Edward's inevitable response to any event over which he has no control, while unperturbed, can hardly be regarded as "humane": wine, for him, is the universal panacea, and one he imbibes whenever disaster threatens. In this, he substitutes alcohol for reason in his pursuit of indifference. His behaviour is a travesty of the philosophy he appears to embrace, and in the course of the play it becomes apparent that the positive qualities he possesses are not evidence of a philosophical or religious position at all, but of complete self-absorption.

The characterisation of Sir Edward provides a good example of the way in which the play simultaneously depicts a series of events and provides an implicit commentary on itself. This in turn positions the audience both within the illusory world of the drama and outside it. While it is reasonable to regard Sir Edward's treatment of his daughters as callous and reprehensible, it is

appropriate to treat it as such only if the play is to be taken seriously. But this is difficult, if not impossible, given the unlikelihood of the events depicted, the melodramatic nature of the action, and the ludicrousness of the characterisation, and if the play cannot be taken seriously, Sir Edward functions not only as a participating figure in the fiction, but also as a guide to an appropriate audience response.

Evidence that the play is a parody is abundant. As is proper for a romance, the main plot focuses on the tribulations of Katherine, Sir Edward's younger daughter, and her lover, Pasquil. Their efforts to be together are thwarted repeatedly by the villainous usurer, Mamon, who will stop at nothing to get rid of Pasquil and claim Katherine for his own. But the prospect of the "yellow toothd, sunck-eyde, gowtie shankt Usurer" (I.181) who, we are told in the list of *dramatis personae*, sports "a great nose" (177), succeeding in winning the love of the desirable young heroine is clearly held up for ridicule. Hence, even though Mamon's attacks on both Pasquil and Katherine are vicious and violent, it is unlikely that a member of the audience will feel much more concern than Sir Edward does. At no point does the plight of the lovers engage the emotions; instead, the hyperbolic treatment of the type of action common to romantic comedy sheds a critical light on the genre.

In a sympathetic study of the play, Ejner J. Jensen suggests that "the presentation of [a variety of] attitudes toward love and marriage gives to the play the substance of its comedy and the basis of its thematic unity" (*John Marston, Dramatist*, 25). He also maintains that the love of Pasquil and Katherine

> may be described not as a complete rejection of the other view advanced in the play but as a harmonious integration of those attitudes into a well-balanced, sane view which is not distorted by an excessive emphasis on one part of the love relationship. . . . in the relationship of the central figures of this comedy Marston presents an ideal of love which gives point to the central theme of *Jack Drum.* (*John Marston, Dramatist.* 29)

Jensen correctly identifies the weaknesses in the other characters' approaches to love and marriage, but to suggest that the relationship of Pasquil and Katherine represents the ideal leads inevitably to the conclusion that Marston is inept in his dramatisation of worthy love.

Marston's quirkiness in naming his characters is sufficiently pronounced to be idiosyncratic: his plays are peopled with such characters as, in *Histriomastix*, the lawyers Voucher, "One who vouches for the truth of a fact or statement or corroborates another person in this respect" (*OED* voucher sb^2 1) and Fourcher, whose name sounds very like "forger", one who "imitate[s] fraudulently" (*OED* forger 5b), and in the *Antonio* plays, Balurdo, "a fool, a noddy, a dizzard, an idiot, a giddyhead" (ed. Gair. 57. 5n) and, ironically, Feliche, "happy, fortunate, blessed, lucky, prosperous, blissful" (ed. Gair. 57. 4n), to name a few. *Jacke Drum's Entertainment* features the aptly named Mamon, while Winifride's meaningful pun, "*Fortune* favours fools" (I.188), attracts attention to the family name of Sir Edward and his daughters. With this in

mind, it is reasonable to suggest that Pasquil's name might be an authorial hint: "pasquil" means "lampoon", which is surely an unlikely name for a lover of the kind suggested by Jensen.

The relationship between the lovers is characterised by linguistic and emotional incongruities. Katherine responds to her lover's summons with:

> sweet, I come, I come
> Even with like swiftnes, tho not with like heart:
> As the fierce Fawcon stoupes to rysing fowle
> I hurrey to thee. (II.198)

Pasquil likewise distinguishes himself with an appalling pun, imploring Katherine, "Oh when I die let me imbrace thy waste" (II.199). It is difficult to take their love scenes seriously when presented with such absurdities as Katherine breaking off a passionate kiss with "Oh you bite my lip" (II.199).

Emotional dislocation prevents any serious consideration of the lovers as ideal. In the third act, in the mistaken belief that Pasquil has been "slaine by bloodie murdering Rogues" (II.205), Katherine goes, dressed only in her petticoat, to where she thinks the murder took place, and attempts to stab herself. Predictably, Pasquil arrives in time to prevent her from doing so, and there follows an ecstatic dialogue in which the lovers once more declare their undying love. In response to Katherine's inquiry, Pasquil explains how the rumour of his death originated: "Old *Mamons* malice was the venombed foame, / That poisoned all the sweets of our content" (III.216). Yet Katherine's reply

shows an indifference reminiscent of that of her father: "Alas deare heart", she says, "that love should be so crost. / Now good *Ned* fetch my gowne, tis at yon house, / I would be loth to turne to Hygate thus" (III.216). Disappointingly, the "good Ned" does not think to ask her why she is clothed "thus", but the general tone of the scene allows for the supposition that it is a lampoon of the stage convention that hair or clothing in disarray signals a state of emotional distress. Katherine's request draws attention to her dress, which might otherwise be forgotten by the audience in the excitement of the moment, and thus acts as a reminder of the play as a play.

Linguistic and emotional problems aside, the disasters that befall the couple are so far-fetched as to be ridiculous. Fortuitously, when John fo de King discloses Mamon's plot to him, Pasquil has with him some paint "found by chaunce in loose *Camelias* chamber" (II.201), which he puts to good use, daubing himself with it to convince Mamon that he has been murdered. (We can only conjecture what this young lover was doing in "loose *Camelias* chamber", since fo de King teasingly refrains from asking him.) Such serendipity also marks Pasquil's timely arrival to prevent Katherine's suicide. This pattern, together with interspersed comic sub-plots prevent us from feeling significant distress on the lovers' behalf, even when Mamon throws poison in Katherine's face, and Pasquil goes mad with grief.

Our interest in the tribulations of the young couple is diverted by Camelia's romantic escapades and Brabant Senior's attempt to trick John fo de King; since there is no need to follow their fortunes at this point, these sub-plots serve a double function operating both as a diversion and a tacit indication

that it is unnecessary to feel distress for the lovers. When Katherine reappears at the end of the play, it would be surprising if she had not been miraculously cured. Rather than exemplifying idealised love, Katherine and Pasquil represent the "unpossible . . . Fictions" (Intro. 179) pilloried by the play as a whole.

If Katherine represents constancy and fidelity, her older sister, Camelia, personifies the opposite, with the action concerning Camelia following a similar, though distorted, pattern to that featuring Katherine. At the beginning of the play she, like Katherine, has a devoted lover. Where Katherine rejects the advances of her two other admirers, Mamon and Puffe, Camelia, led by her maid Winifride, repudiates the faithful Brabant Junior for a liaison with the colourless John Ellis, only to dispose of him to pursue Planet.

The balcony scene, in which Katherine rebuffs Puffe and Mamon and encourages Pasquil, is echoed when Brabant Junior arrives to visit Camelia, confident of a warm reception. Instead, he is greeted by Winifride, who passes on the message that Camelia will have no more to do with him. He is followed by John Ellis, Winifride's choice as a more suitable match for her mistress, because "he that fees me best, speeds best" (I.189). As Winifride correctly observes, Camelia's "love is as uncertaine as the Almanacke, as unconstant as the fashion" (I.189), and Winifride takes full pecuniary advantage of her ability to guide Camelia's affections. When Planet exposes Camelia's fickleness, her advances are rightly spurned by all three of the men she has pursued. Sir Edward drily sums up her situation, commenting that "no bodie will have thee, this is the plague of light inconstancie" (V.237).

Ironically bearing the name of the patron saint of virgins, Winifride acts as pander for any man who desires Camelia, but she is more like Katherine in guarding her own virtue, even though the means she employs differ vastly. Rather than discouraging her suitors, Jacke Drum and John fo de King, Winifride sets up with both of them what they believe are clandestine assignations, arranging for Drum to hide in a sack in the belief that he will be carried to her chamber by Timothy Tweedle, while John fo de King is in fact sent to carry the sack, under the impression that Winifride is inside. Winifride is presented as a foil to both Katherine and Camelia: she is able to enjoy the company of men without compromising her virtue. The only character who is a match for the wily maid is Planet, who uses her greed to manipulate her into unwittingly aiding him in his plot against Camelia.

The story of Katherine and Pasquil, though the main plot, is not the main business of the play. Rather, it forms a framework within which the comic action can be performed. This creates critical difficulties, because what is significant in the play are the short comic dialogues and incidents in which various characters trick each other and indulge in practical jokes. This fragmentation, coupled with the lack of any psychological depth to the characters, effectively prevents any serious analysis which uses character or plot as a starting point.

In the context of this difficulty the concept of the "Poetomachia" has been widely used as a basis for analysis, focusing on the suggestion that Brabant Senior represents Ben Jonson. In *The War of the Theatres*, Stuart E. Omans

argues persuasively against this view, offering several criteria for examining claims that a stage character represents a real person, including the following:

> *Abundant known* biographical facts must be present in the play so that when combined they clearly reinforce each other, and point precisely in the direction of one *recognizable individual.* [Secondly,] single, obtuse, or unclear references to a character in a play cannot be considered as positive biographical evidence. (62. Omans's emphases)

Omans points out that the grounds for identifying Jonson and Brabant Senior are unreliable, since there is insufficient evidence to support the argument. He recommends that the critic should "approach the play in question by initially giving it the benefit of being an artistic creation", and, furthermore, that we should "consider what issues or insights the play provides about itself . . . without first considering the possibility of personal allusions" (62). The problem presented by *Jacke Drum's Entertainment* in this respect is the difficulty in establishing the exact nature of the play as "an artistic creation", together with the paucity of clearly discernible issues and insights: hence the speculation concerning the possibility of its being a vehicle for satirising a rival dramatist.

Where the play does afford some critical purchase is in its implicit commentary on commonly held views both of social mores and of drama itself. In a perceptive analysis of the play based on the relationships between the English and foreigners in renaissance drama, A. J. Hoenselaars remarks on the

way in which the Frenchman, John fo de King, is used to challenge xenophobic prejudices:

> Like his traditional readiness to act as a hired assassin, the Frenchman's lechery is first established as a traditional vice, only to be turned against the English as a proper device for punishment. Marston's tactics of inversion and of overturning established conventions in his portrayal of John fo de King have repercussions not only for Mamon and Brabant. The self-conscious and consistent manner in which Marston goes against stage conventions suggests that in addition he satirized the image of foreigners in such plays as Haughton's, Shakespeare's, or *Grim the Collier.* (*Images of Englishmen and Foreigners,* 70)

The characterisation of the Frenchman is deceptive: he is depicted as naive and foolish, an impression emphasised by his struggles with the English language. The basis of his decision not to kill Pasquil is expressed in superficial terms: "me am hired to kill you, *Mounsieur Mamon* . . . give me money to stab you, but me know there is a God that hate bloud, derefore, me no kil, me know dere is a vench, that love Crowne, derefore me keepe de money" (II.201).

Hoenselaars's observation of fo de King's more serious function leads to the recognition of a concern that pervades many of Marston's plays: the deceptiveness of outward appearances. In *Jacke Drum's Entertainment,* this can be seen both in Sir Edward, whose Stoicism turns out to be no more than the self-

centred expression of a stunted personality, and in Planet, who presents himself as a misanthropic railer, telling Brabant Junior

> Now I am perfect hate, I lov'd but three things in the world, Philosophy, Thrift and my self. Thou hast made me hate Philosophy. A Usurers greasie Codpeece made me loath Thrift: but if all the Brewers Jades in town can drug me from love of my selfe, they shall doo more than e're the seven wise men of *Greece* could: Come, come, now I'le be sociable as *Timon of Athens.* (I.190)

The manner in which he delivers Brabant from his infatuation with the flighty Camelia belies his words, showing him to be one of the few characters capable of deep affection.

The stage incidents of conventional romantic comedy are satirised by a play which broadly fits into the genre, but lacks any substance of consequence. It offers no insights into human behaviour, and the only commentary it provides is reflexive: it is a romantic comedy about romantic comedy. In this manner, Marston draws attention to the inherent absurdity that threatens drama of this genre. With its emphasis on buffoonery and its lack of instructive matter, *Jacke Drum's Entertainment* is an example of the type of comedy Sir Philip Sidney complained of:

> our comedians think there is no delight without laughter; which is very wrong, for though laughter may come with delight, yet cometh it

> not of delight, as though delight should be the cause of laughter; but well may one thing breed both together. . . . Delight hath a joy in it, either permanent or present. Laughter hath only a scornful tickling. ("Defence of Poesie", 148-49)

Nevertheless, while it makes no attempt to provoke anything more than laughter during its performance, *Jacke Drum's Entertainment* does stimulate questions which can be applied to more substantial plays written in the same tradition, and in this way it contributes to the critical debate by insisting that dramatic conventions are simply a matter of social tradition, and they tend to produce meaninglessness when applied indiscriminately.

Marston's interest in the misleading nature of appearances is carried a step further when he examines the consequences of their deliberate manipulation. In *What You Will* he improvises on the theme of outward appearances, focusing on clothing: dress is the basis of the central disguise plot, identity is expressed in terms of apparel, and social contact is determined to a considerable extent by clothing. The play examines some of the consequences of this preoccupation, showing how it affects the behaviour of those who live in a society that is inordinately concerned with externals. Emotions, attachments, personal identity, social discourse, and even the accepted meaning of language can be adopted and discarded, like clothing, with little or no consequence.

The induction introduces the major thematic concern of the play -- the examination of a society that "lean[s] on opinions crutches" (Induction, 232) -- and provides a frame of reference for the sequence of events to follow. It

presents three of the actors discussing the play they are about to perform. The debate between Doricus and Phylomuse centres around the appropriate response to criticism: Phylomuse defends "[his] friend the author", arguing that "his spirit, / Is higher blouded then to quake and pant / At the report of *Skoffes* artillery", while Doricus deplores the "tite braine / Wrung in this custome to mainetaine *Contempt* / Gainst common *Censure*" (Induction, 231, 232). As with the introduction to *Jacke Drum's Entertainment* and the induction to *Antonio and Mellida,* this discussion stands both inside and outside the play itself. It challenges the audience to consider the extent to which their opinions of drama should influence the work of the playwright, while at the same time it leads into the play, in which outward appearances govern not only the actions of most of the characters, but also the plot.

The superficiality of the society depicted is reflected in its dramatisation: a change in the circumstances of a character carries no more weight than would a change in clothing. Scenes of discomfort elicit little concern from the audience: the prevailing tone is that of "a slight toye, lightly composed, to swiftly finisht" (Induction, 233), with the emphasis on humour, which is well illustrated in the opening scene. Courting the widow Celia, the infatuated Iacomo suggests to his page, Phylus, that if Orpheus was able to "bring *Euridice* out of hell with his lute" (I.239), then Phylus ought to be able to "bring *Celias* head out of the window" with his (I.240). This absurd comparison is followed by two attempts to attract Celia's attention with songs, the first being abandoned because it "hath no passion int" (I.240), and the second resulting in "a Willow garland [being] floung downe" from Celia's window above (I.240. s.d.). Iacomo's

response to his effort being met with a symbol of mourning rather than the emergence of the object of his affections is one of instant antipathy; and he vows to redirect his efforts towards thwarting Celia's intended marriage to the knight Laverdure. Iacomo exemplifies the superficiality bred by a society that bases its values on appearance, and in this respect, his threat raises no real concern: his anger is unlikely to be any more profound than was his love.

As it turns out, Iacomo's "vehemence of hate" (I.240) finds expression in the use of clothing. Iacomo, Randolfo and Andrea decide to disguise Francisco, the perfumer, as Albano, Celia's husband, who is believed to have drowned, hoping to prevent the marriage by convincing all concerned that Albano is in fact alive. The plotting scene provides further evidence of the instability and superficiality that permeates Venetian society as a result of its preoccupation with physical appearance. Randolfo and Iacomo praise the missing merchant in sumptuary terms: Randolfo describes him "In black bever felt, ash-colour plaine, / A *Florentine* cloth of silver Jerkin, sleeves / White satten cut on tinsell, then long stocke", and is interrupted by Iacomo who effuses, "French paines imbroder'd, Gold-smithes worke, O God!" (I.241). Again, the shallowness of both emotion and attitude is stressed: the men's reasons for objecting to Celia's marriage are initially moral -- it is too soon after Albano's death -- but this soon changes to an objection to her choice of a husband as they name the men they would have her marry in preference to Laverdure.

The disguise plot focuses attention on the issue of personal identity. Francisco expresses no discomfort or difficulty with the notion that if others would make him "like the drowned *Albano,* . . . [then] must I be hee" (III.260):

identity is simply something he adopts at will. However, the importance of knowing the difference between impersonation and true identity is an underlying theme implied by the action that follows. The extent to which outward appearance and public opinion govern not only popular recognition of an individual but that person's experience of his or her own identity is dramatised in the confusion that follows the arrival of the true Albano shortly after Francisco has adopted his disguise. While Francisco is perfectly comfortable impersonating Albano, the effect on the latter is profound. When he is addressed by his brothers and his closest friends as "Francisco", Albano's distress is such that he responds to his page's confirmation of his identity with the retort, "By this breast you lie / The Samian faith is true, true, I was drown'd / And now my soule is skipt into a perfumer, a gutter-master" (III.269). He then sums up the manner in which appearance governs recognition:

> if *Albanos* name
> Were liable to scence, that I could tast or touch
> Or see, or feele it, it might tice beleefe,
> But since tis voice, and ayre, come to the Muscat boy,
> *Francisco,* that's my name tis right, I, I,
> What do you lack? what ist you lack? right, that's my cry. (III.269).

When Francisco and Albano appear simultaneously, and the others suggest that Albano is a fiddler "attired . . . like *Albano* to fright the perfumer" (IV.281), he at first clings to his latterly ascribed identity, insisting that "I am *Francisco Soranza*

am I not gigglet: strumpet, cutters, swaggerers, brothell haunters, I am Francisco, O god, O slaves, O dogges, dogges, curres!", but he finally capitulates, giving up all claims to any identity: "A fiddler, a scraper, a miniken tickler, a pum, a pum, even now a Perfumer, now a fiddler, I will be even *What you will*"(IV.282).

Albano's plight draws attention to the play's title and its claim to generic indeterminacy: in the induction, when Doricus asks Phylomuse whether the play is "*Commedy, Tragedy, Pastorall, Morall, Nocturnall* or *Historie*" (Induction. 233), the latter replies, "Faith perfectly neither, but even *What You Will*" (Induction. 233). Ironically, *What You Will* is easily identified as a comedy, though this exchange and the references to the title scattered through the play call into question the commonly ascribed meanings of generic labels. This prefigures Saussure's observation that "the signal is . . . arbitrary in its signification, with which it has no natural connexion in reality" (13) and that "any means of expression accepted in a society rests in principle upon a collective habit, or on convention, which comes to the same thing" (12). The "collective habit" of Albano's society is to identify him by his outward appearance, so that when Francisco impersonates him, Albano's identity is ascribed to Francisco.

That meaning in language is similarly arbitrary is demonstrated by the comic Quadratus, who persuasively redefines accepted notions. In the opening scene, for example, he bandies words with Iacomo, arguing that "None but a mad man would terme *Fortune* blind, / How can she see to wound desert so right / Just in the speeding place?" (I.238), and encouraging Iacomo to "Hate knowledge, strive not to be over-wise, / 'It drew distruction into Paradise'"

(I.238). As others take on and put off identities, Quadratus manipulates meaning in language, showing it to be as unstable in some contexts as identity is in others.

As a commentator on his society, Quadratus is too light-hearted to be regarded as a cynic: he refuses to take social norms seriously, which gives him the necessary intellectual distance from the concerns of other characters to provide a useful perspective on the action. Although he occasionally rails in the manner of a satirist, he seldom maintains his satirical stance for any length of time: his well-developed appreciation of the absurd generally predominates, and his personal warmth prevents him from being an outsider. He participates fully in society, even setting himself up as a mentor to Lampatho, undertaking to teach the scholar such skills as how to court women.

Like *Jacke Drum's Entertainment*, *What You Will* is more memorable for its entertainment value than for any issues of critical significance it raises. In spite of its concern with possible consequences of an over-reliance on superficialities, it treats the subject as one of amusement rather than concern. Quadratus points out the absurdities and idiocies he observes, but rather than attempting to change people's behaviour, he joins in wholeheartedly, encouraging them in their folly. In its treatment of disguise and its demonstration of the instability of outward appearances, *What You Will* lightheartedly anticipates the more serious treatment of these in *The Malcontent*, where their potential against the misuse of power is explored.

Notes

[1]. There is little that can be added to what has already been written about the issue of the "Poetomachia" in relation to *Jacke Drum's Entertainment*, so much has it dominated criticism of the play.

CHAPTER 5

The Malcontent[1] is related conceptually to the *Antonio* plays inasmuch as all three plays examine the abuse of power, exploring ways in which illegitimate political ascendancy can be countered and retribution exacted. In this context, *The Malcontent* can also be scrutinised within the frame of reference provided by the *praemeditatio futuri mali*: whereas in the *Antonio* plays, Stoicism is tested as a countermeasure against tyranny, in *The Malcontent* the focus shifts, an alternative measure being postulated. While it has similar basic components to those of the *Antonio* plays -- usurpation, tyranny and revenge -- it treats them in a very different manner, introducing the use of disguise as its primary focus.

While Marston's prefatory letter addressed to the reader refers to the play as a comedy (39), Bernard Harris notes that "'An Enterlude called the Male-content, Tragicomoedia' was entered on the Stationer's Register on 5 July 1604 to William Aspley and Thomas Thorpe" ("Introduction", xiii). But though *The Malcontent* does blend the elements of tragedy and comedy, the generic label of tragicomedy fails to take account of its anomalous position within the revenge tradition. Because revenge is ordinarily associated with violence and murder, our expectations are destabilised by Malevole's declared intention to avenge himself on Pietro using different means:

> Lean thoughtfulness, a sallow meditation,

> Suck thy veins dry! distemperance rob thy sleep!
> The heart's disquiet is revenge most deep.
> He that gets blood the life of flesh but spills,
> But he that breaks heart's peace the dear soul kills. (I.iii.176-80)

As Lee Bliss notes, "Marston uses pastoral tragicomedy's principal concern, faithful and unfaithful love, to refashion revenge tragedy" (246). Not only does Marston adapt revenge tragedy; he also extends the application of "faithful and unfaithful love" to cover fidelity in identity, political dealings, friendship, language and dramatic representation, exploring the concept in relation to disguise and deception. In this respect, M. L. Wine's statement that "*The Malcontent* is a study in deception" ("Introduction" xix) complements Bliss's claim. What Wine does not point out is that Marston turns his treatment of deception into a performative act. The play not only examines deception; it practises it. It is generically linked with revenge drama, but, as Bernard Harris remarks, it "contains no actual murder, though several are intended" ("Introduction" xx), and both characterisation and plot mislead the audience. Within the world of the play, deception is facilitated by the adoption of disguise: characters disguise both themselves and their motives in order to achieve their ambitions.

The deposed duke, Altofronto, epitomises this. Masquerading as the comic satirist Malevole, he subverts his own credibility at the outset. Pietro introduces him to the audience as "one of the most prodigious affections that ever conversed with nature: a man, or rather a monster, more discontent than

Lucifer when he was thrust out of the presence" (I.ii.20-24). This association of Malevole with the Father of Lies appears to be borne out when he tells Pietro that he is being cuckolded by Mendoza. His initially credible account takes a ludicrous turn when he attempts to incite Pietro to revenge by means of an exchange of rallying cries:

> MALEVOLE: Pistols and poniards, pistols and poniards!
>
> PIETRO: Death and damnation!
>
> MALEVOLE: Lightning and thunder!
>
> PIETRO: Vengeance and torture!
>
> MALEVOLE: Catso!
>
> PIETRO: O, revenge! (I.iii.117-23)

Malevole's discourse takes on the appearance of "Dreams, visions, fantasies, chimeras, imaginations, tricks, conceits" (I.iii.64-66) when, using an absurd travesty of logic, he explains how "Adultery is often the mother of incest" (I.iii.148):

> Mark! Mendoza of his wife begets perchance a daughter; Mendoza dies; his son marries this daughter. Say you? Nay, 'tis frequent, not only probable, but no question often acted, whilst ignorance, fearless ignorance, clasps his own seed. (I.iii.150-55)

By the time Pietro leaves, assuring Malevole that the latter will "see instantly what temper my spirit holds" (I.iii.172-3), Malevole has created the impression that he is playing a cruel practical joke of which Pietro is the unfortunate and gullible butt.

Malevole's soliloquy after Pietro's departure does little to change this impression: he declares that his purpose is to afflict the duke with "Lean thoughtfulness, a sallow meditation, / [that will] Suck [his] veins dry!" (I.iii.176-77). Nothing he says during this soliloquy suggests that he has told Pietro the truth. Although he mentions that his "state's usurped" (I.iii.183), it is not until his friend Celso arrives that we discover that Mendoza engineered the marriage between Pietro and Aurelia (I.iv.35-36) which resulted in the political union that enabled Pietro to oust Altofronto, and that Mendoza is indeed cuckolding Pietro.

As in *Jacke Drum's Entertainment* and *What You Will*, outward appearances prove deceptive. Not only is Malevole's persona a disguise, but his semblance of dissembling turns out to be false as well. His credibility during his dialogue with Celso is established by skilful manipulation of the linguistic register he employs. Joan Lord Hall fails to take this into account when she claims that "The opening of *The Malcontent* makes clear the rift between character and role: that Malevole-Altofront should be perceived as a double identity and not a unified consciousness" (50). On the contrary, once he has established in the third scene that he is actually Altofronto, his diction repeatedly reminds us that Malevole is a role that he consciously adopts in order to achieve his ends.

When he plays the part of Malevole his speech is distinctively rough, colloquial, insulting and frequently features bawdy *doubles entendres:*

> Sir Tristram Trim-tram, come aloft Jackanapes with a whim-wham. Here's a knight of the land of Catito shall play at trap with any page in Europe, do the sword-dance with any morris-dancer in Christendom, ride at the ring till the fin of his eyes look as blue as the welkin, and run the wild goose chase even with Pompey the Huge. (I.iii.66-73)

By contrast, the speech Malevole-Altofront uses when he is not engaged in his role as a malcontent is elegant and formal:

> O Celso, constant lord,
> Thou to whose faith I only rest discovered,
> Thou, one of full ten millions of men,
> That lovest virtue only for itself,
> Thou in whose hands old Ops may put her soul,
> Behold forever-banished Altofront,
> This Genoa's last year's duke. (I.iv.2-8)

Although Malevole-Altofront maintains his physical disguise through most of the play, these two vocal registers function as indicators of which persona he is using at any time, and in this way act as a subtle guide, indicating the

appropriate audience response to his utterances. This is borne out by the stage direction "BILIOSO *entering*, MALEVOLE *shifteth his speech*" (I.iv.43.1)

Malevole's shifts in register are not always clear-cut. Although he swears to take revenge on Pietro, and enthusiastically accepts Mendoza's invitation to play the tool-villain and murder the duke, when he finds his putative victim, his behaviour is unexpected. Instead of committing the murder that he tells Mendoza is "My heart's wish, my soul's desire, my fantasy's dream, my blood's longing, the only height of my hopes" (III.iii.82-84), he wakens the sleeping duke and addresses him in a tone that shows traces of Altofronto's speech: "Do not sleep, duke; give ye good morrow. Must be brief, duke; I am fee'd to murder thee. Start not" (III.v.3-5). As Pietro regains consciousness, Malevole reverts to the familiar hectoring tone of the malcontent:

> Politician! Wise man! Death! To be led to the stake like a bull by the horns; to make even kindness cut a gentle throat! Life, why art thou numbed? Thou foggy dullness, speak! Lives not more faith in a home-thrusting tongue than in these fencing tip-tap courtiers? (III.v.23-28)

Malevole's decision not to murder Pietro is indicative of the way Marston extends the concept of disguise to apply to the purpose and method of revenge and to the character against whom it is directed.

In sparing Pietro's life, Malevole does not abandon his intention to take revenge. Rather, he demonstrates how he intends to achieve his aim to

"torment thee; now my just revenge / From thee than crown a richer gem shall part. / Beneath God naught's so dear as a calm heart" (I.iii.190-92). The form of Malevole's revenge does not become clear until after Pietro, disguised as a hermit, has witnessed Aurelia's heartless response to the news of his death. To Pietro's exclamation, "O, let the last day fall, drop, drop on our cursed heads! / Let heaven unclasp itself, vomit forth flames!" (IV.iv.2-3), Malevole brusquely (and reflexively) replies, "O, do not rant, do not turn player. There's more of them than can well live one by another already" (IV.i.4-6). His psychological attacks are merciless: when Aurelia is banished and she expresses her remorse to Pietro, Malevole treats the latter's distress offhandedly, telling him to "take comfort, man; thy betters have been beccos" (IV.v.54-55). Pietro's protest, "Thou pinchest too deep, art too keen upon me" (IV.v.66-67) elicits an explanation from his tormentor: "Tut, a pitiful surgeon makes a dangerous sore. . . . I am vowed to be thy affliction. . . . [b]ecause you are an usurping duke" (IV.v.68-69; 78-79; 82). Thus, as the play progresses and we are shown Malevole's modus operandi, his motive, disguised at first, is revealed as directed towards Pietro's psychological and spiritual reformation and regeneration.

Malevole's reason for doing this is also explicable in terms of disguise. Although Pietro is a usurper, he is neither evil nor vicious, but merely a pawn who, owing to his inability to distinguish truth from lies, is a victim of Mendoza's hidden treachery. In this respect too, the play is performative: the audience is not exposed to Mendoza's lies until we have first been deceived by Malevole's apparent dissimulation concerning Aurelia's infidelity, and subsequently shown the truth (I.iii.87-I.iv.39). The intervening scenes, before

Pietro charges Mendoza with cuckolding him, prepare us for the confrontation between the two men, showing us the events that allow Mendoza to dissemble as he does. By the time Pietro confronts Mendoza, the latter's denial is, strictly speaking, true, since Aurelia has transferred her favour to Ferneze. His protestation of fidelity is a masterpiece of equivocation:

> Bear record, O ye dumb and raw-aired nights,
> How vigilant my sleepless eyes have been
> To watch the traitor. Record, thou spirit of truth,
> With what debasement I ha' thrown myself
> To under-offices, only to learn
> The truth, the party, time, the means, the place,
> By whom, and when, and where thou wert disgraced. (I.vii.12-18)

This speech is grotesquely funny: from earlier scenes, we know that Mendoza has engaged in all the behaviour he describes. Yet the only literal untruth in what he says is that he did it to discover the details concerning Pietro's betrayal. At the same time, Pietro's dilemma concerning who to trust is highlighted. In spite of his having expressed appreciation of Malevole who, he says, "gives good intelligence to my spirit, makes me understand those weaknesses which others' flattery palliates" (I.ii.33-35), Pietro is understandably well-disposed to Mendoza because the latter arranged the marriage that enabled him to become duke (I.iv.35-36).

Infidelity and disguised motives engender misplaced trust, which in turn leads to betrayal. Malevole attributes his deposition to having been too trusting:

> My throne stood like a point in midst of a circle,
> To all of equal nearness; bore with none,
> Reigned all alike; so slept in fearless virtue,
> Suspectless, too suspectless. (I.iv.11-14)

Altofronto's disguise affords him the opportunity to break the cycle by using the instruments of his downfall to engineer a reversal and effect redemption. As Malevole, he is able to force Pietro to recognise that he has been betrayed by the infidelity and disguised motives of Aurelia and Mendoza respectively, driving him to acknowledge that his political ascendancy is both illegitimate and undesirable. Malevole is able to reveal his true identity when Pietro, psychologically defeated, announces:

> I here renounce forever regency.
> O Altofront, I wrong thee to supplant thy right,
> To trip thy heels up with a devilish sleight;
> For which I now from throne am thrown, world-tricks abjure;
> For vengeance, though't comes slow, yet it comes sure. (IV.v.137-141)

This signals Pietro's personal atonement and his escape from the cyclic pattern of infidelity, disguised motives, misplaced trust and betrayal.

Throughout *The Malcontent*, sexual infidelity is linked with political disloyalty in a complex pattern. Pietro gains political power through his misplaced trust of Mendoza and his misuse of marriage, treating it as a means to an end. In spite of this, Pietro's love for his wife is an early sign that his transgressions are consequences of weakness rather than vice. Although he accedes to Mendoza's plan to expose Aurelia's infidelity, his distress at what he must do is genuine, as is evident when he tells Ferrardo, Equato and Celso of the plan:

> My lords, the heavy action we intend
> Is death and shame, two of the ugliest shapes
> That can confound a soul. Think, think of it.
> I strike, but yet, like him that 'gainst stone walls
> Directs his shafts, rebounds in his own face,
> My lady's shame is mine, O God, 'tis mine!
> . . . . . .
> Make frightless entrance, salute her with soft eyes,
> Stain naught with blood; only Ferneze dies,
> But not before her brows. O gentlemen,
> God knows I love her. (II.iii.64-69, 73-76)

Pietro is caught up in circumstances beyond his control, as Malevole implies when he warns the duke, "Time will come / When wonder of thy error will strike dumb / Thy bezzled sense" (II.iii.16-18). As Pietro's life disintegrates because of his misplaced trust, it becomes apparent that he is no more than a puppet manipulated by Mendoza to further his own schemes. His weakness is that of will and judgement rather than of morality.

Aurelia's downfall and redemption follow a similar pattern to Pietro's, in that, like him, she erroneously trusts Mendoza. Recalling his equivocal speech to Pietro, Mendoza ambiguously asserts that "You have wronged him much who loves you too much" (II.v.29-30), a statement which is, strictly speaking, true. It is Pietro, however, not Mendoza, who "loves [her] too much", a point easily missed since Mendoza prefaces the statement with "you ha' done me foul disgrace" (II.v.28-29). Like Pietro, Aurelia also misuses her marriage, betraying Pietro's trust and unwittingly allowing Mendoza use her as a lever against Pietro. She, too, suffers catastrophic loss as a result of her involvement with Mendoza, and finally realises her own culpability when confronted by the disguised Pietro.

The pattern of revenge and disguise affecting Pietro and Aurelia resembles and interweaves with that of Malevole and Pietro. Although Pietro's attempted revenge on Ferneze involves violence, it is not voluntary. By contrast, through his association with Malevole, Pietro unwittingly exacts appropriate, psychological revenge on Aurelia, which leads towards her correction. Although Pietro expresses no desire to further avenge himself after surprising Aurelia and Ferneze in II.v, his disguise allows him to achieve renewal

and, shortly afterwards, the satisfaction of witnessing Aurelia's remorse. As Robert A. Fothergill writes:

> The counterfeit death permits him to fulfil a wish to be done with his guilty and shameful existence, to drown his old self. In reporting, as the Hermit, the final utterances which he might very well have made, he appropriates the extraordinary privilege of what might be called a vicarious suicide. In the presence of the faithless Aurelia he performs the death she has driven him to. (158)

Pietro's disguise not only allows him to refashion himself, but it presents a reflexive action: as a hermit, he enacts the death of his alter ego. This is reminiscent of the way in which, in *Antonio and Mellida*, the actors represent themselves as introduced in the induction; in *The Malcontent*, this concept is extended to encompass the actor playing the part of Pietro playing the part of the hermit, who then performs Pietro's death. Pietro's actions in this scene are reminiscent of those of Antonio when, disguised as the Amazon, Florizel, he recounts his own death to Mellida and Rosaline. In *The Malcontent*, however, the idea is extended to explore the consequences of this for both speaker and listener, reminding the audience that in watching the play, they are in the position of listener in a more elaborate version of the same thing, in which a number of people disguise themselves as dramatic characters and present a fictional narrative.

When, using the reported death of Pietro to justify his actions, Mendoza banishes Aurelia, Pietro witnesses her acknowledgement: "I can desire nothing

but death, / Nor deserve anything but hell" (IV.v.3-4). Aurelia's invocation to the spirit of her believed dead husband, "O, let the anguish of my contrite spirit / Entreat some reconciliation" (IV.v.26-27) prefigures Pietro's renunciation of the dukedom and his declaration:

> In true contrition I do dedicate
> My breath to solitary holiness,
> My lips to prayer, and my breast's care shall be
> Restoring Altofront to regency. (IV.v.143-146)

Their remorse and acceptance of their own culpability confirms that the disasters that afflict Pietro and Aurelia are the result of weakness, not wickedness. Misplaced trust and lack of awareness of disguised motives brings about their downfall, while their redemption is secured by their learning the importance of fidelity and appropriate trust, a lesson taught by the positive use of disguise.

Political and social infidelity are exemplified by Bilioso, who attempts to align himself with whichever faction is in power and whoever is in favour, shamelessly rejecting the same when the political balance shifts. Responding to Bilioso's overtures, Malevole ironically characterises him in inquiring, "Did your signorship ne'er see a pigeon-house that was smooth, round, and white without, and full of holes and stink within? Ha' ye not, old courtier?" (I.v.90-93). Bilioso clearly fails to understand the insult, being oblivious to everything except gaining favour. He tells Malevole that, should Altofront reappear and defeat

Mendoza, he "would turn straight again. / 'Tis good run still with him that has most might: / I had rather stand with wrong than fall with right" (IV.v.100-102). His response to the revelation of Malevole's true identity in the final scene epitomises his inept attempts at guile:

> My lord, I did know your lordship in this disguise; you heard me ever say, if Altofront did return, I would stand for him. Besides, 'twas your lordship's pleasure to call me wittol and cuckold; you must not think, but that I knew you, I would have put it up so patiently. (V.v.160-64)

Although he imitates Mendoza's equivocation, Bilioso lacks the intelligence to conceal his fickleness. As a comic butt, his role is easily underestimated, for in a limited sense he resembles both Pietro and Mendoza. As Aurelia cuckolds Pietro, reflecting his similar misuse of marriage, so Bilioso's wife, Bianca, cuckolds him, echoing his infidelity. Similarly, his fawning behaviour is a caricature of Mendoza's opportunism.

It is Mendoza's wiliness, greater ambition, viciousness and ability to disguise his motives that distinguish him from Bilioso. Mendoza, on his first appearance, exults: "Now, good Elysium, what a delicious heaven is it for a man to be in a prince's favour! . . . . What should I think, what say, what do? To be a favourite, a minion!" (I.v.21-25). Sir William Cornwallis offers a sober comment:

> Vnder these two heads marcheth the glory and danger of the fauorites of Princes, his fortune not to corrupt the state: and first, to the first, there is nothing that is fedde with it owne humour, but encreaseth and groweth mightie, and at last dangerous; thus things combustible, heaped vpon fire, make it grow furious and deuouring; thus waters assembled together beyond the bounds appointed by nature, conspire to ouer-runne the earth. The eyes of the people continually obserue vpon whom the Prince lookes fauourably: vpon whom hee, they, like eyes vnable to behold the Sunne, yet louing light, bend themselues to behold the Sunnes reflection; meeteth this with an ambitious humour, it swelleth him, and at last bursts him. (E8v-F1r)

Although it is Bilioso to whom Malevole refers when he comments, "Envious ambition never sates his thirst, / Till, sucking all, he swells and swells, and bursts" (I.iv.84-85), Mendoza's vaunting ambition makes the remark equally applicable to him. Mendoza typifies infidelity in all his dealings, cultivating trust only to betray it, and using equivocation to beguile his victims.

Malevole defeats Mendoza through the identification and exploitation of the latter's weaknesses. The intricacies of his plotting against Pietro and Aurelia leave Mendoza dependent on a third party to execute his plans, a contingency Malevole takes advantage of when he masquerades as a tool-villain employed to kill Pietro (III.iii.76-91). Like his victims, Mendoza brings about his own

downfall by misplacing trust. He differs from Piero and Aurelia, however, in that their trust is in others, whereas Mendoza's trust is in his own ability to manipulate events and people to suit his own purposes. He is profoundly antisocial, which makes him irredeemable.

Early in the play, Mendoza declares:

> I'll profane, burst, violate, 'fore I'll endure disgrace, contempt, and poverty.
> Shall I, whose very "hum" struck all heads bare,
> Whose face made silence, creaking of whose shoe
> Forced the most private passages fly ope,
> Scrape like a servile dog at some latched door?
> Learn now to make a leg, and cry, "Beseech ye,
> Pray ye, is such a lord within?" be awed
> At some odd usher's scoffed formality?
> First sear my brains! (II.i.17-26)

Mendoza's obsession with power and recognition allows Malevole to exact retribution that is entirely appropriate and consonant with the latter's understanding of revenge as psychological, best aimed at achieving "[t]he heart's disquiet" (I.iii.78). Besides, Malevole uses the occasion to assert his own power. Gordon Braden observes, "Whereas . . . pity depends on either the ruler's weakness or the subject's deserving, . . . pardoning where there is no particular reason to pardon . . . is in its arbitrariness a display of pure strength" (16).

Although Malevole does not pardon Mendoza, he does spare his life, dismissing him as beneath contempt with: "An eagle takes not flies" (V.v.167-68).

In its wide-ranging treatment of fidelity and disguise, *The Malcontent* offers what might be described as a homeopathic solution to the abuse of power, using a part of what causes the problem to solve it, much as a homeopath treats allergies by administering small doses of the allergen to the sufferer. Taking as its villain a character who is duplicitous in all his dealings, it offers as his nemesis one who reflects that doubleness, employing it in the form of disguise to defeat his opponent. The play, the last of the group experimenting with possible responses to tyranny suggests that, whereas, in the Antonio plays, Stoicism offers no check and violent revenge is morally reprehensible, use of the tyrant's methods against him or her can achieve the desired result.

Notes

[1] All references to *The Malcontent* are to *The Selected Plays of John Marston.* Ed. MacDonald P. Jackson and Michael Neill. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986): 187-287. This edition excludes Webster's additions to the play as identified by David J. Lake (Jackson and Neill, "Introduction", 190-91): this edition suits my intention to examine the play as a non-collaborative work.

CONCLUSION

Taken as a group and approached with the notion of experimentation as a guide, Marston's five plays after *Histriomastix* are unexpectedly unified. A general pattern can be discerned in which Marston focuses on a particular idea and explores it until its possibilities under given circumstances are exhausted, while a new idea gains ascendancy. Thus, for example, his interest in Stoicism is particularly evident in the *Antonio* plays and *Jacke Drum's Entertainment*, whereas the problems and possibilities presented by disguise are prominent in *What You Will* and *The Malcontent*. This is not to say he loses all interest in Stoicism: both latter plays feature aspects of it. However, in the earlier ones the efficacy of the philosophy is examined, while the later plays focus on disguise.

The *praemeditatio futuri mali* model provides a useful perspective on the plays: not only is it pertinent in view of Marston's interest in Stoicism, but, as Braden has remarked, theatricality is an integral part of Stoic rhetoric. The *praemeditatio futuri mali* is inherently theatrical: if, as has been suggested, it is an actualisation of events rather than simply an imaginative exercise, then a theatrical production is most likely the closest approximation of reality available. Braden explains that, furthermore,

> the good actor -- who lives by his detachment from any of his roles, who understands that they are not real in themselves but only occasions to try his skill, and who, knowing the script, moves in

> complete control through a situation he only pretends is risky -- is a figure with many affinities to the Stoic stage. (26)

Praemeditatio futuri mali is thus a thought experiment enacted by the Stoic who, by virtue of Stoic detachment, closely resembles an actor. Applying the model to the *Antonio* plays and *The Malcontent*, an ironically reflexive prospect emerges; one in which a Stoic exercise reveals the limitations of Stoicism and the superiority of an alternative which is independent of philosophy, although it could be argued that disguise, in its role-playing aspect, is a further variation of Stoic theatricality.

Jacke Drum's Entertainment and *What You Will*, while they remain outside the heuristic framework if it is viewed as an experiment pertaining to power, can be included if two other experimental categories are postulated: those examining Stoicism, comprising the *Antonio* plays and *Jacke Drum's Entertainment*, and those focusing on disguise, *The Malcontent* and *What You Will*. In this way a complex, interlocking pattern of relationships between the five plays emerges.

Histriomastix clearly cannot be included in this model, but it is important in that it alerts us to the other ways in which Marston experiments with dramatic conventions, creating plays that, while often puzzling or unsatisfying, explore the medium with which he is working in a way that illustrates the extent to which dramatic conventions are taken for granted. This is more noticeable in the earlier plays; by the time he wrote *The Malcontent*, Marston's transgressions of convention have almost disappeared. In this respect, while it is the most successful of this group of plays, *The Malcontent* is also the least interesting from

an experimental point of view. It is as though Marston went beyond the limits of current dramatic practice in order to discover the exact position of those limits through a process of retraction. Conventions he tested in this manner include virtually every aspect of dramatic representation: genre, structure, plot, character, language and tone.

As has been noted, *Histriomastix* is conceivably the most adventurous of Marston's generic experiments, the pageant model resulting in a play with a fragmented structure and no plot. *In What You Will*, the validity of generic labelling is questioned when, in the induction, Doricus asks Phylomuse, "*Ist Commedy, Tragedy, Pastorall, Morall, Nocturnal* or *Historie*?", to which the reply is "Faith, perfectly neither, but even *What You Will*" (Induction, 233). The truth of Phylomuse's answer is borne out by the play itself which, in its dramatisation of Albano's distress, veers towards tragedy, while the overall action remains comic. The actions of Quadratus and his cohorts suggest satire, but this is undermined by the good humour that inevitably reasserts itself. Likewise, although *Antonio and Mellida* is referred to as a comedy (Induction, 144-45), the ending renders this designation questionable, while *Jacke Drum's Entertainment* raises questions about romantic comedy by adhering to its generic conventions in a manner that invites ridicule of the tradition, and *The Malcontent* takes the ingredients of revenge tragedy to create a virtually bloodless tragicomedy.

Perhaps the most radical challenge to the conventions of plot is to be found in the *Antonio* plays, particularly in *Antonio and Mellida*, in which the "real" plot, to recall Barthelme's use of the word, as well as the "real" plotting, exist outside the performance, with the furthest-reaching event, Andrugio's murder,

taking place after the end of the play. In the other plays, with the exception of *Histriomastix*, the main plots are relatively straightforward, but are frequently undermined by sub-plots whose parodic tone tends to discourage any impulse to treat the main plot seriously, which is possibly why Marston's plays are so widely regarded as satirical or parodic.

Marston's treatment of character, incident and language raises one of the most interesting aspects of his work: the way in which drama, while often seeming to be mimetic, is in fact reflexive. That is to say, drama does not represent life; it represents drama. Characters in Marston's early plays behave disconcertingly like living people (rather than dramatic representations of people) in their inconsistency, indecision and unpredictability. Marston emphasises this by casting many of them as stereotypes who then fail to conform to stereotypical behaviour, thus drawing attention to the artificiality of their representation on the stage. The use of stereotypes, while exaggerated in Marston's plays, suggests that, even though dramatic characters may appear to be representations of living people, their depiction is necessarily based on a consensual notion of the characteristics that make particular character types recognisable. When Marston's characters break out of their stereotypes, it is generally in such a way that we are made conscious of the extent to which dramatic representation limits depiction. Language and incident help to convey this message, which is most obvious in *Antonio and Mellida.* Incidents such as the love scene between Antonio and Mellida in which they speak in Italian emphasise the failure of drama to accurately depict strong emotion, while the

focus on Antonio's role as lover excludes our awareness of his more intellectual qualities.

In some respects, Marston's dramaturgy displays an insistence on placing the audience in a similar position to that of characters in a play, withholding the privileged information with which audiences are usually supplied. This can be seen as a replication of reality that offers tacit commentary on the dramatic conventions that help render situations explicable. *Antonio and Mellida* and *The Malcontent* provide the clearest examples of this. In *Antonio and Mellida*, the absence of informative soliloquies or asides in which characters reveal their private thoughts or intentions gives rise to the confusion many readers experience when confronted by the ending of the play. This characteristic of Marston's dramaturgy can also be found in *The Malcontent*, where Malevole's purpose of effecting reform through exacting psychological revenge is never articulated, which leads to confusion when he refrains from killing both Pietro, and, in the end, Mendoza. In *The Malcontent*, Marston also exploits the performative possibilities offered by disguise, subjecting the audience to a confusion regarding characters' motives that resembles the confusion being depicted on the stage. Repeatedly, the unreliability of appearances as a basis for judgement is performed, with the figures on the stage enacting the consequences, but the audience are never allowed to assume a position of superiority, because we are manipulated into forming equivalent misjudgements.

Pietro's refusal to kill Mendoza, however, cannot result in regeneration or reform, and this points to another aspect of reality that enters Marston's plays, causing considerable perplexity. The plays tend to resist the tidiness of

resolutions in which conventional values are depicted as being upheld. This is less a sign of amorality on Marston's part than an acknowledgement that in life such closure is impossible. The questionable justice that marks the endings of both *Antonio's Revenge* and *The Malcontent* seems to be the result of an attempt to portray resolutions as they really are, rather than as dramatic convention requires. Thus *Antonio's Revenge* closes on the unsolved moral problems of whether, under certain circumstances, murder deserves to go unpunished, and if so, what the appropriate treatment of the murderer should be. In *The Malcontent*, Ferneze's recidivism is dramatically upsetting. Convention leads us to expect that, having almost lost his life as a result of his lechery, Ferneze will either have learnt from his experience or he will be punished for his failure to learn. Marston dramatises neither option; instead, Ferneze appears as one of Malevole's avenging group and entertains himself by flirting with Bianca, Bilioso's wife (V.v.87-99). His assertion that he will marry her (V.v.88 and 97) is indicative of his obtuseness: not only has he failed to learn from his previous error, but he has forgotten that Bianca is already married. Rather than portraying what we might like to see and (conventionally) expect, Marston reminds us that there are people who are incorrigible.

Reality impinges on dramaturgy in *Histriomastix* in the portrayal of the inexorability of events in spite of Chrisoganus's best efforts: regardless of his exhortations and efforts to change society, the cycle of Peace, Plenty, Pride, Envy, War and Poverty continues, and even he is subject to their influence. This does not necessarily suggest that all efforts to improve society are futile; it does remind us, however, that such efforts are not guaranteed to succeed.

Similarly, in *Antonio and Mellida*, we see that the good and noble are not inevitably rewarded: Andrugio's courage leads directly to his defeat and death, without achieving any improvement in Piero's behaviour.

In their experimentalism and their eccentric treatment of dramatic conventions, Marston's plays offer a critique of society, audience expectations and drama itself. The plays are rich in social comment, both tacit and overt, challenging us to examine our ideas and question our values on a wide range of questions concerning the importance (or lack of it) we accord learning, the criteria we use to judge character, the usefulness (or not) of philosophy or religion, how significant the opinions of others are, whether certain acts are intrinsically evil or not, and the effects of outward appearances. Marston raises such issues (and others) in his plays by presenting hypothetical situations in which a particular response or set of responses is acted out, showing one possible outcome of that attitude. The plays are challenging and thought-provoking, stimulating further thought rather than offering simple solutions through closure.

Audience expectations are reliant on convention: if we have no certainty about what it is we are watching, we are uncertain how to respond. Marston exploits this, deliberately manipulating conventions in such a way as to continually upset audience equilibrium. This, too, acts as a stimulus to thought: if our expectations are met, and a play proceeds as we anticipate, there is no need to question either the values being presented or the manner in which they are depicted. But where the conventions are transgressed, we are forced into a

consciousness of what is being done, which invites a re-examination of much that is taken for granted.

Finally, drama itself is questioned in terms of whether it constitutes a realistic presentation of human behaviour, and the artificiality of the way in which narratives are presented dramatically is made obvious. The effect of this, while it may not make Marston's plays satisfying, is to encourage a heightened appreciation of what constitutes satisfying drama. Marston's work engenders neither satisfaction nor comfort: it heightens our awareness of what is actually happening when we watch a play.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms.* 6th Ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1993.

Aggeler, Geoffrey D. "Stoicism and revenge in Marston". *English Studies: A Journal of English Letters and Philology.* 51.6 (December 1970): 507-517.

Baker, Howard. *Induction to Tragedy: A Study in a Development of Form in Gorboduc, The Spanish Tragedy and Titus Andronicus.* New York: Russell & Russell, 1939.

Barish, Jonas A. "The Uniqueness of Elizabethan Drama". *Drama in the Renaissance: Comparative and Critical*

Barthelme, Donald. "Not-Knowing". *The Best American Essays 1986.* Ed. and Intro. Elizabeth Hardwick. Series Ed. Robert Atwan. New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1986. 9-24.

Beecher, Donald. "The Sense of an Ending: John Marston and the Art of Closure". *The Show Within: Dramatic and Other Insets: English Renaissance Drama (1550-1642).* Ed. François Laroque. Montpellier: Paul-Valery UP, 1990. 369-379.

Belsey, Catherine. *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama.* London: Methuen, 1985.

Bennett, Robert Beale. "The Royal Muse: Malcontentedness in John Marston's *The Malcontent*". *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England.* Vol. 1. Ed. J. Leeds Barroll, III. New York: AMS, 1984. 71-81.

Bergeron, David M. *English Civic Pageantry 1558-1642.* London: Edward Arnold, 1971.

---. *Pageantry in the Shakespearean Theatre.* Athens, Georgia: Georgia UP, 1985.

Bergson, Allen. "Dramatic Style as Parody in Marston's Antonio and Mellida ". *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900.* 11.2 (Spring 1971): 307-325.

Bliss, Lee. "Pastiche, Burlesque, Tragicomedy". *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama.* Ed. A. R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990. 237-261.

Blostein, David A. "Introduction". *The Fawn.* By John Marston. The Revels Plays. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1978. 1-62.

Braden, Gordon. *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition: Anger's Privilege.* New Haven: Yale UP, 1985.

Braunmuller, A. R. "The Arts of the Dramatist". *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama.* Ed. A. R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990. 53-90.

Brewer, E. Cobham. *The Dictionary of Phrase and Fable.* New York: Avenel, 1978.

Brodsky, G. W. S. "Fortune's Bawd: Symbolism of the Maquarelle Episode in The Malcontent". *Seventeenth-century News* 41.1-2 (Spring-Summer 1983): 9-11.

Brodwin, Leonora Leet. *Elizabethan Love Tragedy.* London and New York: London and New York University Presses, 1972.

Burnett, Mark Thornton. "'I will not swell like a tragedian': Marston's Antonio's Revenge in Performance". *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 90.3-4 (1989): 311-340.

Caputi, Anthony. *John Marston, Satirist.* Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1961.

Castiglione, Baldassare. *The Book of The Courtier.* Tr. Thomas Hoby, 1561. Intro. Walter Raleigh. New York: AMS, 1967.

Colley, John Scott. *John Marston's Theatrical Drama.* Jacobean Drama Studies 33. Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1974.

Cornwallis, Sir William. *Discourses Upon Seneca The Tragedian (1601).* Introduced by Robert Hood Bowers. New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1952.

Dessen, Alan C. *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.

Diehl, Huston. "Iconography and Characterization in English Tragedy 1585-1642". *Drama in the Renaissance: Comparative and Critical Essays.* Eds. Clifford Davidson, C. J. Gianakaris and John H. Stroupe. AMS Studies in the Renaissance: No. 12. New York: AMS Press, 1986. 11-20.

Dollimore, Jonathan. *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries.* Great Britain: Harvester, 1984.

Doran, Madeleine. *Endeavors of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama.* Madison: Wisconsin UP, 1954.

Eliot, T. S. "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation". *Selected Essays.* By T. S. Eliot. London: Faber and Faber, 1951. 65-105.

---. "John Marston". *Selected Essays.* By T. S. Eliot. London: Faber and Faber, 1951. 221-33.

Ellis-Fermor, Una. *The Jacobean Drama: An Interpretation.* London: Methuen, 1936.

Elyot, Sir Thomas. *The Book Named The Governor (1531).* Ed. S. E. Lehmberg. London: Dent-Everyman, 1962.

Farley-Hills, David. *The Comic in Renaissance Comedy.* Totowa, N. J.: Barnes and Noble, 1981.

---. *Jacobean Drama: A Critical Study of the Professional Drama, 1600-25.* Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1988.

Finkelpearl, Philip. *John Marston of the Middle Temple: An Elizabethan Dramatist in his Social Setting.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1969.

Foakes, R. A. "John Marston's Fantastical Plays: Antonio and Mellida and Antonio's Revenge". *Philological Quarterly* 41.4 (October 1962): 229-239.

---. "Mr. Levin and 'Good Bad Drama'". *Essays in Criticism.* 22.3 (July 1972): 327-329.

Fothergill, Robert A. "The Perfect Image of Life: Counterfeit Death in the Plays of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries". *University of Toronto Quarterly.* 52.2 (Winter 1982/3): 155-178.

Foucault, Michel. "Technologies of the Self". *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault.* Eds. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, Patrick H. Hutton. London: Tavistock, 1988. 16-49.

Frost, David L. *The School of Shakespeare.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1968.

Gair, W. Reavley. "Introduction". *Antonio and Mellida.* By John Marston. The Revels Plays. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1991.

---. "Introduction". *Antonio's Revenge.* By John Marston. The Revels Plays. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1978.

---. *The Children of Paul's: The Story of a Theatre Company, 1553-1608.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982.

Geckle, George L. *John Marston's Drama: Themes, Images, Sources.* Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1980.

Gentili, Vanna. "Madmen and Fools Are a Staple Commodity: On Madness as a System in Elizabethan and Jacobean Plays". *Cahiers Elisabethains* 34 (October 1988): 11-24.

Gosson, Stephen. *The Schoole of Abuse (1579).* Ed. Arthur Freeman. Series: The English Stage: Attack and Defense 1577-1730. Facsimile Edition. New York: Garland, 1973.

Grantley, Darryll. "Masques and Murderers: Dramatic Method and Ideology in Revenge Tragedy and the Court Masque". *Jacobean Poetry and Prose: Rhetoric, Representation and the Popular Imagination.* New York: St Martin's, 1988.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More To Shakespeare.* Chicago: Chicago UP, 1980.

Griswold, Wendy. *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theatre, 1576-1980.* Chicago: Chicago UP, 1986.

Guilhamet, Leon. *Satire and the Transformation of Genre.* Philadelphia: Pennsylvania UP, 1987.

Hadas, Moses, trans. "Introduction". *The Stoic Philosophy of Seneca: The Essays and Letters of Seneca.* By Lucius Annaeus Seneca. Trans. and Intro. Moses Hadas. New York: Norton, 1968.

Hall, Joan Lord. *The Dynamics of Role-Playing in Jacobean Tragedy.* New York: St. Martin's, 1991.

Hallett, Charles A. and Elaine S. Hallett. *The Revenger's Madness: A Study of Revenge Tragedy Motifs*. Lincoln and London: Nebraska UP, 1980.

Harris, Bernard. "Introduction". *The Malcontent*. By John Marston. New Mermaids. London: Ernest Benn, 1967. xi-xxxii.

Highet, Gilbert. *The Anatomy of Satire*. Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1962.

Hoenselaars, A. J. "Reconstructing Babel in English Renaissance Drama: William Haughton's Englishman for my Money and John Marston's Antonio and Mellida". *Neophilologus* 76.3 (July 1992): 464-479.

---. *Images of Englishmen and Foreigners in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: A Study of Stage Characters and National Identity in English Renaissance Drama, 1558-1642*. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1992.

Hoy, Cyrus. *The Hyacinth Room: An Investigation Into the Nature of Comedy, Tragedy and Tragicomedy*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1964.

Hunter, G. K. "Introduction". *The Malcontent*. By John Marston. The Revels Plays. London: Methuen, 1975.

---. "English Folly and Italian Vice: the Moral Landscape of John Marston". *Dramatic Identities and Cultural Tradition: Studies in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*. Ed. G. K. Hunter. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1978. 103-132.

---. "Seneca and English Tragedy". *Dramatic Identities and Cultural Tradition: Studies in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*. Ed. G. K. Hunter. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1978. 174-213.

---. "Seneca and the Elizabethans: A Case-Study in 'Influence'". *Dramatic Identities and Cultural Tradition: Studies in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries.* Ed. G. K. Hunter. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1978. 159-173.

Jensen, Ejner J. "The Changing Faces of Love in English Renaissance Comedy". *Drama in the Renaissance: Comparative and Critical Essays.* Eds. Clifford Davidson, C. J. Gianakaris and John H. Stroupe. AMS Studies in the Renaissance: No. 12. New York: AMS Press, 1986, 45-60.

---. *John Marston, Dramatist: Themes and Imagery in the Plays.* Jacobean Drama Studies, 80. Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1979.

Kernan, Alvin. "John Marston's Play Histriomastix". *Modern Language Quarterly* 19.1 (March 1958): 134-140.

Kirsch, Arthur C. *Jacobean Dramatic Perspectives.* Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 1972.

Koenigsberger, H. G. *Early Modern Europe 1500-1789.* London: Longman, 1987.

Leggatt, Alexander M. *Citizen Comedy in the Age of Shakespeare.* Toronto: Toronto UP, 1973.

Le Guin, Ursula. "Is Gender Necessary? Redux". *Dancing at the Edge of the World.* By Ursula Le Guin. London: HarperCollins-Paladin, 1992.

Levin, Richard. "The New New Inn and the Proliferation of Good Bad Drama". *Essays in Criticism* 22.1 (January 1972): 41-47.

---. "The Proof of the Parody". *Essays in Criticism* 24.3 (July 1974): 312-316.

Limon, Jerzy. "Revenge Tragedy, or, a Decayed Form -- A Review Essay". *Southern Humanities Review* 16.3 (1982): 257-267.

Lucas, F. L. *Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1922.

Manning, C. E. "Seneca's 98 Letter and the Praemeditatio Futuri Mali". *Mnemosyne* 29 (1976): 301-304.

Marston, John. *Antonio and Mellida.* Ed. W. Reavley Gair. The Revels Plays. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1991.

---. *Antonio and Mellida.* Ed. G. K. Hunter. London: Edward Arnold, 1965.

---. *Antonio's Revenge.* Ed. W. Reavley Gair. The Revels Plays. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1991.

---. *The Malcontent.* Ed. Bernard Harris. New Mermaids. London: Ernest Benn, 1967.

---. *The Malcontent.* Ed. M. L. Wine. Regents Drama Series. London: Edward Arnold, 1965.

---. *The Plays of John Marston.* Ed. H. Harvey Wood. 3 vols. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1934-1939.

---. *The Selected Plays of John Marston.* Ed. MacDonald P. Jackson and Michael Neill. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986.

---. *The Poems of John Marston.* Ed. Arnold Davenport. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1961.

Mehl, Dieter. *The Elizabethan Dumb Show: The History of a Dramatic Convention.* London: Methuen, 1965.

Montaigne, Michel de. *The Essays: A Selection.* Trans. and Ed. M. A. Screech. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993.

Nashe, Thomas. "Preface to Robert Greene's Menaphon". *A Mirrour of Monsters, Preface to Robert Greene's Menaphon, Kind-Harts Dreame.* Ed. Arthur Freeman. Facsimile Folger copy, 1589. New York: Garland, 1973.

Newman, R. J. "Cotidie meditare. Theory and Practice of the meditatio in Imperial Stoicism". *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* 2.36.3: 1473-1517.

Nicoll, Allardyce. *The World of Harlequin: A Study of the Commedia dell'Arte.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1963.

Omans, Stuart E. *The War of the Theatres: An Approach to its Origins, Development, and Meaning.* Diss. Northwestern U, 1969. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1993.

Peacham, Henry. *Peacham's Compleat Gentleman 1634.* Intro. G. S. Gordon. Oxford: Clarendon, 1906.

Peter, John. *Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature.* Oxford: OUP, 1956.

Porter, Joseph A. "Puzzling Marston and Homer (A Response to Brownell Salomon and William W. E. Slights)". *Connotations* 2.1 (1992): 93-96.

Powers, Doris C. *English Formal Satire: Elizabethan to Augustan.* The Hague: Mouton, 1971.

Robertson, Karen. "Antonio's Revenge: The Tyrant, the Stoic, and the Passionate Man". *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England. IV.* Ed. J. Leeds Barroll. New York: AMS Press, 1989. 91-106.

Salomon, Brownell. "A Letter in Reply to Joseph A. Porter". *Connotations* 2.1 (1992): 97.

---. "The 'Doubleness' of The Malcontent and Fairy-tale Form". *Connotations* 1.2 (1991): 150-163.

---. "Towards Tolerant Pluralism in Renaissance Drama Studies (An Answer to William W. E. Slights)". *Connotations* 2.1 (1992): 82-85.

Saussure, Ferdinand de. "Nature of the Linguistic Sign". *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader.* Ed. David Lodge. London: Longman, 1988. 10-14.

Schoenbaum, Samuel. "The Precarious Balance of John Marston". *Elizabethan Drama: Modern Essays in Criticism.* Ed. Ralph J. Kaufmann. London: OUP, 1961.

Scott, Michael. *John Marston's Plays: Theme, Structure and Performance.* London: MacMillan, 1978.

Seneca, Lucius Annaeus. *The Stoic Philosophy of Seneca: Essays and Letters.* Trans. and Intro. Moses Hadas. New York: Norton-Doubleday, 1958.

Sevenster, J. N. *Paul and Seneca.* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961.

Shakespeare, William. *Richard III.* Ed. E. A. J. Honigmann. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968.

Shirer, William L. *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany.* London: Pan, 1964.

Sidney, Sir Philip. "Defence of Poesie". *The Literature of Renaissance England.* Eds. John Hollander and Frank Kermode. New York: OUP, 1973. 136-149.

Slights, William W. E. "Fairy-tales, Form, and the Future of Marston Studies (A Response to Brownell Salomon)". *Connotations* 1.3 (191): 302-307.

---. "Unfashioning the Man of Mode: A Comic Countergenre in Marston, Jonson and Middleton". *Renaissance Drama: Modes, Motifs and Genres.* n.s.XV. Ed. Leonard Barkan. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1984. 69-91.

Spenser, Edmund. "A Letter of the Authors". *The Faerie Queene.* By Edmund Spenser. Ed. Thomas P. Roche, Jr, assisted by C. Patrick O'Donnell, Jr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978.

Strong, Roy C. *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry.* London: Thames & Hudson, 1977.

Sutherland, Sarah P. *Masques in Jacobean Tragedy.* New York: AMS, 1983.

Taft, Edmund M. "The Malcontent Redux: A Response to Brownell Salomon and William W. E. Slights". *Connotations* 2.1 (1992): 86-92.

Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1989.

Tomlinson, T. B. *A Study of Elizabethan and Jacobean Tragedy.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1964.

Tricomi, Albert H. *Anticourt Drama in England 1603-1642.* Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 1989.

Weiss, Adrian. "A Pill to Purge Parody: Marston's Manipulation of the Paul's Environment in the Antonio Plays". *The Theatrical Space.* Ed. James Redmond. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987. 81-97.

Wharton, T. F. "Old Marston or New Marston: The Antonio Plays". *Essays in Criticism* 25.3 (July 1975): 357-369.

Whitney, Geoffrey. *A Choice of Emblemes 1586.* English Emblem Books No. 3. Sel. and Ed. John Horden. Yorkshire: Scolar, 1969.

Wickham, Glynne. *Early English Stages 1300-1600.* Vol. 1, 1300-1576. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959.

Wine, M. L. "Introduction". *The Malcontent.* By John Marston. Regents Drama Series. London: Edward Arnold, 1965. xi-xxv.

Wither, George. *A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Moderne (1635).* Intro. Rosemary Freeman, Bibliographical Notes by Charles S. Hensley. Columbia, South Carolina: South Carolina UP, 1975.

Withington, Robert. *English Pageantry: An Historical Outline.* Vol. 1. (2 Vols.). Harvard: Harvard UP, 1918. Reprint NY: Arno, 1980.